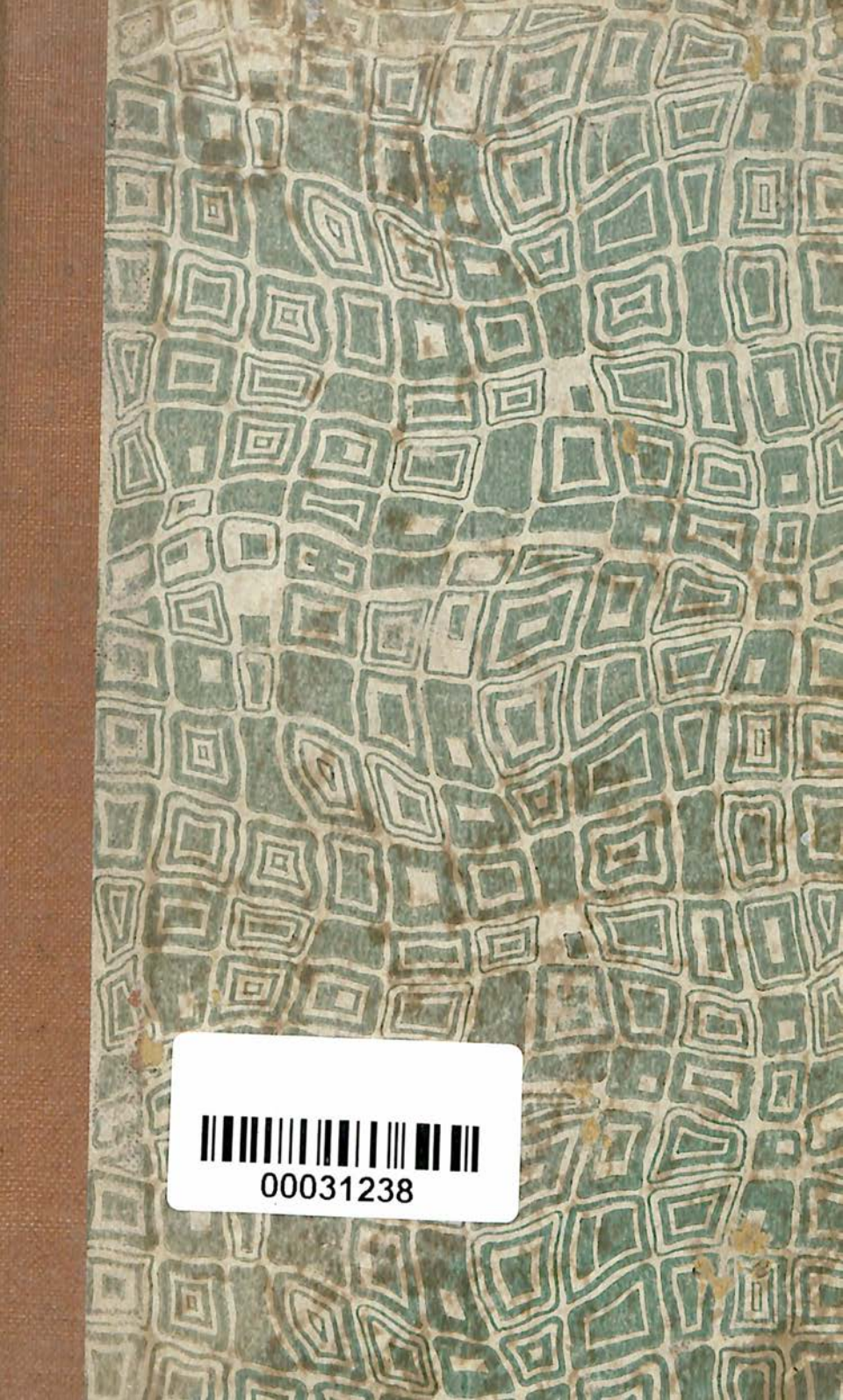
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Major General Sir Thomas Picton

A HISTORY OF THE PENINSULAR WAR

BY

CHARLES OMAN
M.A. Oxon., Hon. LL.D. Edin.
FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY
CHICHELE PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY
FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE REAL ACADEMIA
DE LA HISTORIA OF MADRID, OF THE ACADEMY OF LISBON
AND THE ACADEMY OF SAN LUIS OF SARAGOSSA

VOL. IV

DEC. 1810–DEC. 1811

MASSÉNA'S RETREAT FUENTES DE OÑORO
ALBUERA TARRAGONA

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

IN this volume are contained the annals of all the many campaigns of 1811, with the exception of those of Suchet's Valencian expedition in the later months of the year, which for reasons of space have to be relegated to Volume V. It was impossible to exceed the bulk of 660 pages, and the operations on the Mediterranean coast of Spain can be dealt with separately without any grave breach of continuity in the narrative, though this particular Valencian campaign affected the general course of the war far more closely than any other series of operations on the Eastern side of the Peninsula, as I have been careful to point out in the concluding chapters of Section XXIX.

The main interest of 1811, however, centres in the operations of Wellington and his opponents, Masséna, Soult, and Marmont. In the previous year the tide of French conquest reached its high-water mark, when Soult appeared before the walls of Cadiz, and Masséna forced his way to the foot of the long chain of redoubts that formed the Lines of Torres Vedras. Already, before 1810 was over, Masséna's baffled army had fallen back a few miles, and this first short retreat to Santarem marked the commencement of a never-ceasing ebb of the wave of conquest on the Western side of the Peninsula. Matters went otherwise on the Eastern coast in 1811, but all Suchet's campaigns were, after all, a side issue. The decisive point lay not in Catalonia or Valencia, but in Portugal.

When Masséna finally evacuated Portugal in March 1811, forced out of his cantonments by Wellington's skilful use of the sword of famine, a new stage in the war began. The French had lost the advantage of the offensive, and were never to regain it on the Western theatre of war. All through the remainder of 1811 it was the British general who dealt the strokes, and the enemy who had to parry them. The strokes were feeble, because of Wellington's very limited resources, and for the most part were warded off. Though Almeida fell in May, the siege of Badajoz in June, and the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo in August and September, were both brought to an end by the concentration of French armies which Wellington was too weak to attack. But the masses of men which Soult and Marmont gathered on the Guadiana in June, and Dorsenne and Marmont gathered on the Agueda in September, had only been collected by a dangerous disgarnishing of the whole of those provinces of Spain which lay beneath the French yoke. They could not remain long assembled, firstly because they could not feed themselves, and secondly because of the peril to which their concentration exposed the abandoned regions in their rear. Hence, in each case, the French commanders, satisfied with having parried Wellington's stroke for the moment, refused to attack him, and dispersed their armies. That the spirit of the offensive was lost on the French side is sufficiently shown by the fact that when their adversary stood on the defensive upon the Caya in June, and at Alfayates in September, they refused to assail his positions.

We leave the allied and the French armies at the

end of the autumn campaign of 1811 still in this state of equipoise. Wellington had made two successive attempts to strike, and had failed, though without any grave loss or disaster, because the forces opposed to him were still too great. His third stroke in January 1812 was to be successful and decisive, but its history belongs to our next volume.

The main bulk of the seven sections herewith presented consists of a narrative of the successive phases of the long deadlock between Wellington and his enemies along the Portuguese frontier: but I have endeavoured to give as clear a narrative as I can compile of all the side-campaigns of the year, in Andalusia, Murcia, Estremadura, Galicia, the Asturias, and Catalonia, and to show their bearings on the general history of the great Peninsular struggle.

I must apologize for the long space of time—three years—that has elapsed between the appearance of the third and the fourth volumes of this work. But it was impossible to produce these sections till I had taken two more voyages over the more important fighting-grounds of 1811—one round Catalonia, the other along the line of Masséna's retreat from Portugal. It was only in the last days of September 1910 that I was able to accomplish the latter journey. It was made under the happiest conditions, for the government of King Manuel kindly lent me a motor-car, and put at my disposition the services of Captain Teixeira Botelho, an admirable specialist on the artillery side of the Peninsular War. Guided by him, and accompanied by my friend Mr. Rafael Reynolds of Barreiro, I was able to study the topography of Pombal, Redinha, Condeixa, Casal Novo, and Foz do Arouce, not to speak of many other

picturesque spots of military interest. Hence my survey of the main fighting-grounds of 1811 has been fairly complete—I spent long days at Fuentes de Oñoro and Albuera, walked all round Badajoz and the field of the Gebora, and studied Tarragona and other Catalan sites. Barrosa alone, I regret to say, I have not been able to visit.

I have to offer grateful thanks to many possessors of documents, who have been good enough to place them at my disposition. The most important of all were the D'Urban papers, lent to me by Mr. W. S. M. D'Urban, of Newport House, near Exeter; the diary and official correspondence of his grandfather, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Beresford's Chief-of-the-staff during the Estremaduran campaigns of 1811, were simply invaluable for the comprehension of those operations. I had already acknowledged my indebtedness to the D'Urban papers in my narrative of 1810; but in the following year, when Beresford was acting as the leader of an independent army, they were even more important—as my constant references to them in notes will show.

A new source of high value came to my knowledge last year, through the kindness of Mr. G. Scovell, of Hove, who placed in my hands the papers of his grandfather, Major Scovell, who acted in 1811–12–13 as Wellington's cipher-secretary. Not only was this officer's personal diary of great use to me, but the file of the intercepted French dispatches in cipher, with the interpretation of them worked out with infinite pains, proved as valuable as it was interesting. Many of the originals, written on small scraps of the thinnest paper, and folded into such minute shapes that they could be sewed on to a button, or hidden in a coat-

seam, had evidently been taken on the persons of emissaries of the French generals, who had been captured by the guerrilleros, and had probably in most cases cost the bearers their lives. The ciphers were of two sorts: in the more complicated every word was in cipher; in the less complicated only names of persons and places and the numbers of troops or dates were disguised, the bulk of the dispatch being in plain French. In the key to these last there were several hundred arbitrary numbers used, and it was Major Scovell's task to make out from the context, or the repetition of the same figures in many documents, what the individual numbers meant. By the end of his researches he had identified four-fifths of the names, and those which he had not all belonged to unimportant persons or places, infrequently mentioned.

A much shorter but quite interesting file of diary and letters placed at my disposal were those of Cornet Francis Hall of the 14th Light Dragoons. They practically covered only the year 1811, but were very full, and written in an animated descriptive style, very different from that of many dry and short journals. They contained by far the best account of the cavalry part of the fighting at Fuentes de Oñoro that I have ever seen, and I am exceedingly obliged to the writer's granddaughter Miss E. G. Hall for allowing me to utilize them.

I am still occasionally using notes of 1811 made from two collections of unpublished letters, of which I had occasion to speak in my last preface, those of General Le Marchant, now in the hands of Sir Henry Le Marchant of Chobham, and those of General John Wilson belonging to Commander Bertram Chambers

R.N. To both of the courteous possessors of these files of correspondence I owe my best thanks.

I must mention, as in previous volumes, much kind help given me by those connected with the military archives of Paris, Madrid, and Lisbon. Once more I must acknowledge the unfailing kindness of M. Martinien at the French War Ministry, who did so much to make easy for me endless searches through the overflowing *cartons* of its Library. At Madrid Commandant Juan Arzadun of the Artillery Museum placed much suggestive material at my disposal, and found me one or two scarce books, while Major Emilio Figueras at the War Ministry searched out and copied for me a number of unpublished 'morning states' of the various Spanish Armies. I must also recur to the name of Captain Teixeira Botelho of the Portuguese Artillery, my companion on the line of Masséna's retreat, who furnished me with a rich mine of information in his unpublished *subsidios para a historia da Artilheria Portugueza.*

Among my English helpers I must give a special word of thanks to Major John Leslie, R.A., to whose researches I owe all that I know about the British artillery in the Peninsular War. His 'Dickson Papers' are always at my elbow, and I owe him particular gratitude for the Artillery Appendix XXIV, which he has been good enough to compile for me. To the Hon. John Fortescue, the historian of the British Army, whom we were proud to welcome at Oxford as Ford Lecturer this year, I am deeply indebted for his answers to my queries on many dark points, and most especially for his notes as to several suppressed parts of the *Wellington Correspondence.* Mr. Rafael Reynolds of Barreiro, who shared in my

September tour of last year, has obtained for me in Lisbon a number of rare Portuguese volumes, most especially a complete set of Marshal Beresford's *Ordens do Dia* for the whole Peninsular War—an almost unprocurable collection, containing every general order, report of a court martial, list of promotions, and statistical paper, which was issued to the Portuguese Army. It is absolutely invaluable for identifying names and dates, and settling questions of organization. The Rev. Alexander Craufurd, grandson of the famous commander of the Light Division, has continued, as in previous years, to place his store of information concerning the campaigns of that hard fighting unit at my disposal.

Lastly, the compiler of the index, a weary task executed under many difficulties, must receive my heartfelt thanks for much loving labour.

I must apologize to readers for some occasional discrepancies in spelling which may be discovered in the text and maps. They are mainly due to the fact that all along the Portuguese-Spanish frontier every town and village is spelt differently by its own inhabitants and by its close neighbours of the other nationality. I find it impossible to avoid the occasional intrusion of a Portuguese spelling of a Spanish locality, and vice versa. Matters are made still more hard by the fact that the spelling of local names in Portugal (less so in Spain) seems to have been much changed since 1811. It is difficult to avoid occasionally an archaic, or on the other hand a too-modern, form for a name. These slight errors, or discrepancies between names as spelled in the text and in the maps, were nearly all caused by alterations between the received spelling of 1811, followed in the maps I used, and that of 1911.

I do not think that they will cause any difficulty to the reader, who will not e.g. find it hard to recognize that Foz do Arouce is the same as Foz de Arouce or Casal Novo as Cazal Novo.

In a few cases the critic may find a slight difference in the numbers of troops, or of killed and wounded, which are given in the text and in the appendices. In almost all cases this results from the fact that the official totals quoted in the text turned out not to work out in exact agreement with the detailed list of items in the 'morning states' or the complete casualty lists. These errors, always trifling, could not be discovered till the arithmetic of the appendices had been verified, sometimes when the text had already been printed off. The most frequent discrepancies were found in comparing Wellington's totals of Portuguese strengths or casualties with the detailed official figures. In all instances the differences are small, but the Appendices must be taken to give the more exact numbers.

C. OMAN.

OXFORD:
July 1, 1911.

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SECTION XXIII

THE WINTER CAMPAIGN OF 1810–11

CHAPTER I

MASSÉNA AT SANTAREM. THE DEADLOCK ON THE LOWER TAGUS. DECEMBER 1810—JANUARY 1811

On the 18th of November, 1810, Masséna had completed the movement to the rear which he had commenced on the 14th. His army no longer threatened the Lines of Torres Vedras: he had abandoned the offensive for the defensive. Concentrated in the triangle Santarem–Punhete–Thomar, with his three corps so disposed that a march of twenty miles would suffice to concentrate everything save outlying detachments, he waited to see whether his enemy would dare to attack him; for he still hoped for a battle in the open field, and was prepared to accept its chances. At Bussaco, so he reasoned, his defeat had been the result of an over-bold attack on a strong position. The event might go otherwise if he threw the responsibility of the offensive on Wellington. He had secured for himself an advantageous fighting-ground: his left flank was protected by the formidable entrenchments around Santarem; his front was covered by the rain-sodden valley of the Rio Mayor, which during the winter season could be crossed only at a few well-known points. His right wing could not be turned, unless his adversary were ready to push a great force over villainous roads towards Alcanhede and the upper course of the Rio Mayor. And if Wellington should risk a large detachment in this direction, it might be possible to burst out from Santarem, against the containing force which he would be compelled to leave on the banks of the Tagus, about Cartaxo, and to beat it back towards the Lines —a movement which would almost certainly bring back the turning column from the North. For the English general could not dare to leave Lisbon exposed to the chances of a sudden blow, when there was little but Portuguese militia left to occupy

the long chain of defensive works from Alhandra to Torres Vedras. For some weeks after his retreat to his new position at Santarem, Masséna lived in hopes that Wellington would either deliver an attack on his well-protected front, or undertake the dangerous turning movement towards his left.

No such chance was granted him. His adversary had weighed all the arguments for and against the offensive, and had made up his mind to rely rather on his old weapon—starvation—than on force. In several of his December dispatches he sums up the situation with perfect clearness; on the 2nd he wrote to Lord Liverpool, 'It would still be impossible to make any movement of importance upon the right flank of the enemy's position at Santarem without exposing some divisions of troops to be insulated and cut off. The enemy having concentrated their army about Torres Novas, &c., I do not propose to make any movement by which I incur the risk of involving the army in a general action, on ground less advantageous than that which I had fixed upon to bring this contest to an issue [i. e. the Lines]. The enemy can be relieved from the difficulties of their situation only by the occurrence of some misfortune to the allied army, and I should forward their views by placing the fate of the campaign on the result of a general action on ground chosen by them, and not on that selected by me. I therefore propose to continue the operation of light detachments on their flanks and rear, to confine them as much as possible, but to engage in no serious affair on ground on which the result can be at all doubtful[1].' At the end of the month he simply restates his decision: 'Having such an enemy to contend with, and knowing (as I do) that there is no army in the Peninsula capable of contending with the enemy, excepting that under my command; that there are no means of replacing any large losses I might sustain; and that any success acquired by a large sacrifice of men would be followed by disastrous consequence to the cause of the allies, I have determined to persevere in the system which has hitherto saved all, and which will, I hope, end in the defeat of the enemy[2].'

[1] *Dispatches*, vii. pp. 23–4, from Cartaxo, December 2.

[2] Also to Lord Liverpool, Cartaxo, December 29.

Accordingly Wellington's main army was kept for the three winter months of December, January, and February almost precisely on the same ground on which it had been placed in the last week of November. The three British cavalry brigades formed a line in front of the whole, reaching from Porto de Mugem on the Tagus to São João de Ribiera on the upper Rio Mayor[1]. The infantry divisions (save the 2nd) were arranged in successive lines of cantonment behind them, watching the course of the Rio Mayor, while the reserves had retired as far as the Lines of Torres Vedras. Practically the whole force could be concentrated in a single march—or a march and a half at most—in case Masséna should take the improbable—but still conceivable—step of sallying out from Santarem to resume the offensive. When the first French reinforcements began to come up—about the New Year of 1810-11—such a sally seemed to Wellington quite worth guarding against[2]. The disposition of the infantry was as follows: On the right, near the Tagus, lay the Light Division, immediately in front of Santarem, quartered in Valle and other villages. On the left the front line was formed by Pack's Portuguese, who lay at Almoster, on heights overlooking the middle course of the Rio Mayor. In support of the Light Division, but five miles to the rear, at Cartaxo and other places, was the large and powerful 1st Division, 7,000 bayonets. The 4th Division lay at an equal distance behind the 1st, at Azambuja and Aveiras da Cima. Behind Pack, on the inland or Leiria road, Picton and his 3rd Division were placed at Alcoentre. Their support was the 5th Division at Torres Vedras in the old Lines, seventeen miles to the rear, from which a circuitous road led to Alcoentre. Finally the newly-formed 6th Division was placed at the other end of the Lines, but just outside them, at Alemquer and Arruda, with Le Cor's Portuguese division immediately behind, at Alhandra.

In all the main army consisted of about 48,000 men of all

[1] De Grey's brigade at Valle, with the Light Division; Anson's on the left at São João; Slade's at Porto de Mugem on the right, near the Tagus.

[2] Wellington to Liverpool, December 29. 'Whatever may be Masséna's opinion of his chance of success in an attack on the allied army, I am convinced that he will make it, if he receives orders from Paris, whatever the amount of the reinforcements sent to him.' *Dispatches*, vii. p. 84.

arms; but this did not compose the whole of Wellington's available resources. He had transferred a considerable detachment to the southern bank of the Tagus, to protect the Alemtejo against any possible descent by the French. It will be remembered that as early as the beginning of November [1] he had sent across the river Fane's Portuguese cavalry and a battalion of Caçadores, who were directed to watch the road along the further bank, to prevent any trifling force of French from crossing in search of provisions, and to keep open the communications with Abrantes. As long as Masséna was threatening the Lines of Torres Vedras, there was no danger that he would throw anything more than a raiding party across the Tagus; he would want every man for the great assault. But when the Marshal gave up the offensive and retired to Santarem, the aspect of affairs was changed; it was quite possible that, with his army in a state of semi-starvation, he might venture to send a considerable detachment over the river, to gather the food which was so necessary to him. Nor was it unlikely that he might have a still more cogent reason for invading the Alemtejo. If, as Wellington thought probable [2], the army of Andalusia were to be ordered up to assist the army of Portugal, it would be of great importance for the latter to possess a footing on the left bank of the Tagus, as the communication with Soult's troops must certainly be made in this direction. Accordingly there was good reason for securing the line of the river, and for cooping up Masséna in his limited sphere on its western bank. On the 19th–20th of November, Hill and the 2nd Division, attended as usual by Hamilton's two Portuguese brigades, and with the 13th Light Dragoons attached, crossed the Tagus in boats a little to the north of Salvaterra, to reinforce Fane's detachment. This was a serious force—10,000 men—which Wellington could ill spare, and he made elaborate arrangements to enable it to return in haste, in the event of Masséna's once more taking the offensive on the western bank of the Tagus. The flotilla of

[1] See vol. iii. p. 462.

[2] The first hint of this occurs in a letter to Lord Liverpool, from Cartaxo, December 21, in which Wellington 'thinks it not improbable that a large part (if not the whole) of the French army of Andalusia may be introduced into the southern part of this kingdom [Portugal].'

gun-boats and river craft, which had been guarding the river, was to be kept ready at Alhandra to bring back the 2nd Division, at the first alarm of a movement of the French from Santarem. Meanwhile Hill moved up the river and established his head quarters at Chamusca, a little north of Santarem, from which point he could both observe the main body of the French and impede any attempt that they might make to cross the river, and also could keep in touch with Abrantes, and reinforce it, supposing that Masséna showed any signs of molesting it. The British brigades of the 2nd Division were distributed along the river, William Stewart's at Pinheiros and Tramagal most to the north, Hoghton's at Chamusca, Lumley's at Almeirim, exactly facing Santarem. Hamilton's two Portuguese brigades continued the line southward, Fonseca's brigade at Mugem, Campbell's at Salvaterra. Fane's four regiments of Portuguese cavalry, and the British 13th Light Dragoons, were strung out by squadrons along the whole front from the neighbourhood of Abrantes to Almeirim, patrolling the river bank with unceasing care [1].

On the 29th of November Hill was disabled by a severe attack of fever, and the control of all the troops beyond the Tagus devolved on his senior brigadier, William Stewart. Wellington only allowed this hard-fighting but somewhat too venturesome officer to retain his very responsible command for a few weeks. Troubled by Stewart's constant requests to be allowed to make offensive movements against the French, which did not enter into his own plans [2], and dreading the consequences of his enterprise, the Commander-in-Chief superseded him, by sending over Beresford to take the charge of all the forces on the Alemtejo bank of the Tagus (December 30). He would have preferred to give the duty to Hill, who had in the preceding summer carried out a similar task with complete success, while he watched Reynier from Castello Branco [3]. But Hill's fever

[1] These arrangements are taken from the unpublished diary of D'Urban, the Quarter-Master-General of the Portuguese army.

[2] Wellington (December 8) sarcastically thanks Stewart for sending him plans for an attack on the enemy, but utterly scouts them. *Dispatches*, vii. pp. 36–7.

[3] See pp. 269–79 of vol. iii.

lingered on for many weeks, and when he was convalescent the medical men insisted that he must return to England for change of air. This he did in February, and we miss his familiar name in the records of the Peninsular War for a space of three months, till his reappearance at the front in May.

Beresford therefore began, with the New Year, to exercise a semi-independent command over the detached force beyond the Tagus, which he was to retain for nearly six months. The experiment of giving him this responsible duty was not altogether a happy one; and after his unsuccessful operations in Estremadura, and his ill-fought victory at Albuera, Wellington withdrew him to other duties in June, and once more handed over the troops south of the Tagus to the cautious yet capable hands of Hill.

The main force, meanwhile, faced the front of Masséna's army; Beresford's detachment observed its left flank along the Tagus. But this was not all; Wellington had also taken his precautions to cast around the rear of the irregular parallelogram held by the French a screen of light troops, which effectually cut their communications with Spain, and restricted, though they could not altogether hinder, their marauding raids in search of provisions. This screen was weakest beyond Abrantes, on the line of the Zezere; but here the land was barren, and the enemy had little or nothing to gain by plundering excursions. The Castello Branco country was only guarded by its own Ordenança levy, which was trifling in force, as the whole 'corregedoria' from the Zezere to the Elga had only 40,000 souls, and it had sent its two militia regiments within the Lisbon lines. But, save in the small upland plain about Castello Branco itself, there was practically neither population nor tillage. The less barren and deserted mountain land between the Zezere and the Mondego was much more worth plundering, and was protected by the militia brigade of John Wilson, who lay at Espinhal on the Thomar–Coimbra road, with a force of four battalions, which ought to have numbered 3,000 men, but often shrank down to 1,500. For the militiamen, unpaid and ill-fed, deserted freely during the winter season, and as their homes lay far northward, by the Douro, it was not easy to gather them back to their colours. But Wilson had always a sufficient nucleus about him

to check any marauding party that fell short of a regiment, and was a real restraint on the foragers of the 6th Corps, when they pushed out from Ourem or Thomar to gather food. He was only once seriously engaged, when, on December 23rd, General Marcognet, with two battalions and a cavalry regiment, came up against him, drove him out of Espinhal after some skirmishing, and pushed a reconnaissance as far as the Mondego, of which we shall hear in its due place.

Beyond Wilson to the west, the line of observation was taken up by Trant's militia brigade, which lay at Coimbra, to which town many of its fugitive inhabitants had by this time returned. He had a larger force than Wilson—seven militia regiments, whose strength varied from day to day but seldom fell below 3,000 men. With this irregular force he watched the line of the lower Mondego, keeping pickets out some way to the south of the river, as far as Louriçal and Redinha. They were only once driven in, when on Dec. 6th–8th one of Montbrun's dragoon regiments pushed up the high road, and verified the fact that all the passages of the lower Mondego, including the bridge of Coimbra, were guarded.

The last link in the chain of detachments which Wellington had cast around the French was the garrison of the sea-girt fortress of Peniche, half-way between Lisbon and the mouth of the Mondego. It was held by the dépôts of several infantry regiments of the regular army, under General Blunt of the Portuguese service, not by any single organized unit. But there were some 2,000 or 3,000 recruits, more or less trained, in the place, and the enterprising Major Fenwick, whom Blunt had put in charge of his outpost-line, kept large pickets out in the direction of Caldas and Obidos, which frequently came in contact with the raiding parties of the 8th Corps, and did them much harm. Fenwick was mortally wounded in action near Obidos on Dec. 4th[1], but the forward position of these outposts of the Peniche garrison was maintained, and the French could never forage in the coastland for a radius of some

[1] Mentioned in Wellington's dispatch of December 10 to Lord Liverpool, but the date December 4 is fixed by D'Urban's diary. For exploits of Fenwick in November and December see Tomkinson's *Diary*, pp. 58 and 66.

fifteen miles around that fortress, though they moved as they pleased about Leiria and the deserted abbeys of Batalha and Alcobaça. The Portuguese outposts at Caldas were in close and regular touch with Anson's cavalry pickets from São João de Ribiera on the Rio Mayor.

It will be seen therefore that the limited space in which Masséna's army could seek its living was a parallelogram, bounded by the Tagus on the south, the lower Zezere on the east, the Rio Mayor and the Alcoa (the river of Alcobaça) on the west, and on the north by an irregular line drawn from Leiria through Pombal to Cabaços near the Zezere. Outside these limits food could only be got by large detachments, moving with all military precautions, and obliged to keep up a constant running fight with the Portuguese militia. The profit from such expeditions, whose march was necessarily very slow, was so small that Masséna sent out very few of them, since the peasantry got off with their flocks into the hills, whenever the first skirmishing shots along the high road were heard. The sustenance of the French was mainly obtained by harrying and re-harrying the area bounded by the limits stated above, where they could work their will without meeting with any resistance. There was very little change in the cantonments of Masséna's army during the three months of their stay between the Tagus and the Zezere. Of the 2nd Corps both divisions were in the Santarem fortifications, holding the town and the banks of the Rio Mayor to the west of it. Close in touch with the 2nd Corps came the 8th, with Clausel's division in front line from Tremes to Alcanhede and Abrahão, and Solignac's in second line at Torres Novas, Pernes, and the adjacent villages. Both corps had their cavalry brigades out in front of them, along the line of the Rio Mayor. Ney and the 6th Corps formed the general reserve of the army, having Mermet's division at Thomar (the Marshal's head quarters), and Marchand's at Golegão near the Tagus; Loison's, the third division of the corps, was detached on the Zezere, guarding the bridge which had been established across that river at Punhete, and watching the garrison of Abrantes. Its front post was at Montalvão beyond the Zezere, only five miles from the Portuguese fortress; its remaining battalions were ranged along the river from Punhete as far north as Dornes. Montbrun and

the cavalry reserve (less certain squadrons lent to Loison), lay at Chão-de-Maçans on the northern skirts of the plain of Thomar; they had one infantry regiment (lent by Ney) to support them, at Cabaços, and their main duty was to watch and restrain Trant and Wilson, with whose advanced posts they were always bickering.

The situation of the French army was remarkably compact: Ney's division at Golegão was only one long march (eighteen miles) behind Reynier; his second division at Thomar was less than two marches (twenty-six miles) behind Junot. Only Loison could not have been brought up at short notice, supposing that Wellington had attacked the line of the Rio Mayor. If, on the other hand, an Anglo-Portuguese force had debouched from Abrantes to attack Loison—no impossible plan, and one that William Stewart had strenuously urged Wellington to adopt—the division at Punhete could have been reinforced from Golegão and Thomar in one march, since the former of these places is about thirteen miles from the Zezere, and the latter not more than ten.

Masséna's dispositions, as can be seen at a glance, were purely defensive. They could not be otherwise, when his army had dwindled down by the beginning of December to 45,000 efficient sabres and bayonets, while his hospitals were encumbered by 8,000 or 9,000 sick. All that he aspired to do was to hold on in the Santarem–Rio Mayor position, pinning his adversary down to the neighbourhood of Lisbon, till he should be restored to the power of taking the offensive once more, by the arrival of reinforcements; his aid must come on one side from Soult and the Army of Andalusia, on the other from Drouet's 9th Corps, whose services had been promised to him by the Emperor long before the invasion of Portugal began. But down to the end of the year he had not the slightest breath of information as to whether this assistance was close at hand, or whether it had, perchance, not even begun to move in his direction. Since he had cut himself loose from the frontier of Spain in September, not a single dispatch had reached him, not even a secret emissary had penetrated to his head quarters. For all that he knew Napoleon might be dead, or engaged in a new war with some continental enemy. It is an astonishing testimony to the

efficiency of the screen of Portuguese Ordenança and militia, which Wellington had cast round the French army, to find that nothing had slipped through. And the Marshal's attempts to send out news of himself had been almost equally well foiled; all his messengers had been intercepted save Foy, who (as it will be remembered) had forced his way over the unfrequented Estrada Nova road on October 31st [1]. And Foy had got through to Ciudad Rodrigo because he had been given such a large escort —600 men—that no mere gathering of local Ordenança could stop him.

Masséna, down to the end of December, did not know in the least whether Foy or any other of his emissaries had got through. He had simply to wait till news should penetrate to him. Meanwhile the one governing preoccupation of his life was to get food for his army, since if food failed he must be driven to the disastrous winter retreat, across flooded streams and between snow-clad mountains, to which Wellington hoped to force him. The English general's forecast of the time which would be required to starve out the French army was wrong by some eight or nine weeks. He thought that they would have consumed every possible morsel of food that could be scraped together by December—as a matter of fact they held out till the end of February, in a state of constantly increasing privation. It seems that Wellington underrated both the capacity for endurance that the enemy would show, and still more the resources which were available to him. The Portuguese government had ordered the peasantry to destroy all food-stuffs that they could not carry off, when the country-side was evacuated in October, and the people retired within the Torres Vedras lines. Ostensibly the decree had been carried out; but it was impossible to induce these small cultivators to make away with good food, the worst of crimes to the peasant's mind. The large majority hid or buried, instead of burning, their stores, trusting to recover what they had concealed when the French should have departed. Many of the hiding-places were very ingenious —in some cases caves in the hills had been used, and their

[1] The next messenger who got through was Major Casabianca, who started on January 21st with 400 men, and safely reached Rodrigo. See Fririon's *Journal of the Campaign of Portugal*, p. 129.

mouths plastered up with stones and earth. In others, pits or *silos* had been dug in unlikely places, and carefully covered up, or cellars had been filled, and their entrances bricked up and concealed. The ingenuity that is bred by an empty stomach soon set the French on the search for these hoards. When it was once discovered that there was much hidden grain and maize in the country, every man became a food-hunter. Whole villages were pulled down in the search for secret places in their walls or under their floors. Parties scoured every ravine or hillside where caves might lurk. We are told that one effective plan was for detachments to go about with full barrels in fields near houses, and to cast water all over the surface. Where the liquid sank in suddenly, there was a chance that a *silo* lurked below, and the spade often turned up a deposit of hundreds of bushels. But more drastic methods than these were soon devised. In the sort of no-man's-land between the actual cantonments of the French army and the outposts of Wilson, Trant, and Blunt, the population had not entirely disappeared. Though the large majority had retired, some of the poorest or the most reckless had merely hidden themselves in the hills for a week or two, and came down cautiously when the French had marched by towards Lisbon. A sprinkling of miserable folk lived precariously in or near their usual abodes, always ready to fly or to conceal themselves when a foraging party was reported in the neighbourhood. Hence came the horrid business that one French diarist calls the 'chasse aux hommes'; it became a regular device for the marauders to move by night, hide themselves, and watch for some unwary peasant. When he was sighted he was pursued and often caught. He was then offered the choice between revealing the hiding-places of himself and his neighbours, and a musket-ball through the head. Generally he yielded, and the party went back with their mules loaded with grain, or driving before them some goats and oxen. Sometimes he was himself starving, could reveal nothing, and was murdered. We are assured by more than one French narrator of these hateful times that it was discovered that torture was more effective than the mere fear of death. If the prisoner could or would discover nothing, he was hung up for a few minutes, and then let down and offered

a second chance of life. Sometimes this led to revelations; if not he was strung up again for good [1]. Torture by fire is also said to have been employed on some occasions.

Naturally these atrocities were not practised under the eyes of the officers commanding regular foraging parties [2]. But when a company had dispersed in search of plunder, the men who were separated in twos or threes without control acted with such various degrees of brutality as suited themselves. Moreover, there was a floating scum of unlicensed marauders, who had left their colours without leave, and were in no hurry to rejoin them. These were responsible for the worst crimes: sometimes they gathered together in bands of considerable strength, and it is said that they were known to fire on regular foraging parties who tried to arrest or restrain them [3], and that one troop, several hundred strong, fought a desperate skirmish with a whole battalion sent to hunt them down. But it was not these *fricoteurs*, as they were called, who were the sole offenders; many horrors were perpetrated within the limits of the cantonments by the authorized raiding companies. Guingret of the 39th, in Ney's corps, mentions in his diary that he had seen such a detachment return to camp, after having surprised a half-deserted village, with a number of peasant girls, whom they sold to their comrades, some for a couple of gold pieces, others for a pack-horse [4], and assures us that rape was habitual when such a surprise had succeeded. It was in vain that Masséna and the corps-commanders issued general orders prohibiting misconduct of any kind, and even executed one or two offenders caught *flagrante delicto*. For the regimental officers, who depended on the individual efficiency of their men in marauding for their daily food, were not too eager to make inquiries as to what had passed outside their own vision, and the soldier who brought home much booty was not

[1] For a description of this see Lemonnier-Delafosse's *Mémoires*, p. 95.

[2] 'Les détachements se subdivisent à mesure qu'ils s'éloignent: et il en résulte que les hommes isolés des chefs se livrent à toute espèce de rapines et même à des cruautés sur les pauvres paysans,' says Noël (p. 128).

[3] The story of the marauding sergeant 'Maréchal Chaudron' and his band, given by Marbot (ii. pp. 418–19), is probably exaggerated by that lively narrator—the scale is too large. But there was undoubtedly some foundation for the tale; see Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Mémoires*, p. 103.

[4] Guingret, pp. 124–6.

too closely questioned as to the manner in which he had obtained it. When a foraging party had turned over many bushels of wheat or maize, or a hundred sheep, to the store of their battalion, it could hardly be expected that their colonel would show his gratitude by inquiring whether the happy find had been procured by torture or by simple murder.

Of the three corps which formed Masséna's army, that of Reynier, in the Santarem entrenchments, seems to have suffered most, because it was concentrated on a narrow position, with no unexhausted country around it, and with other troops immediately in its rear, who had sucked dry the resources of the plain of Golegão. Its foraging parties had to go thirty miles away before they had a chance of finding ground that had not been already picked over most carefully by the men of the 6th or the 8th Corps. Junot's men were a little better off, as they had the Leiria–Alcobaça country immediately on their flank, and could plunder there without molestation, unless they pressed in too closely upon the outposts of Trant's or Blunt's detachments. Nevertheless the 8th Corps lost more men by disease than either of the others during this hard winter. It was composed to a great extent of conscript battalions new to Spain, young and unacclimatized, whose men died off like flies from cold, dysentery, and rheumatism. Clausel's division, which contained all these raw units, sank from 6,700 to 4,000 men in the three months that preceded the New Year, without having been engaged in any serious fighting—a loss of forty per cent.: while the case-hardened troops of Reynier, who had been in the Peninsula since 1808, and had already gone through the privations of Soult's marches to Corunna and Oporto, only shrank from 17,000 to 12,000 bayonets in the same three months. Moreover, of the 5,000 lost by them, 2,000 were the casualties of Bussaco, not the victims of Wellington's scheme of starvation. Ney's corps and the cavalry reserve were better off than either Junot's or Reynier's troops, having at their disposition the fertile country between Golegão, Thomar, and Abrantes, where, at the commencement of their sojourn, food was to be got with comparative ease—many fields of maize were still standing unreaped when they first arrived, and it was not till after the New Year of 1811 that they began to be seriously pinched, and to be

driven far afield, up the valley of the Zezere and into the mountains in the direction of Espinhal and Coimbra. The 6th Corps was still 18,000 strong out of its original 24,000 on January 1st, and of the 6,000 missing, 2,000 represented Bussaco casualties in actual fighting.

It must be confessed that the French army displayed splendid fortitude and ingenuity in maintaining itself on the Tagus so long beyond the period of Wellington's estimate. That it did not altogether dissolve, when it was living from hand to mouth, with a fifth or a quarter of the men habitually absent on foraging expeditions, is surprising. Desertions to the allied lines, save from the foreign battalions in Loison's and Solignac's divisions, were very rare; the native French gave many recruits to the marauding *fricoteurs*, but seldom passed over to the enemy. The regimental officers succeeded in organizing a regular system by which the exploitation of the country-side was made as effectual as could be managed. They repaired and set going the ruined mills, discovered and rebuilt the bakers' ovens of every village and town, and in most cases organized regimental food-reserves which made them independent of the general commissariat[1]. For there was little or nothing to be got from head quarters. Shoes proved the greatest difficulty, but the men learnt to make rude mocassins or 'rivlins' of untanned hide, which served fairly well, though they needed constant replacing[2]. In some regiments a third of the men might be seen wearing this primitive footgear. Another weak point was ammunition—there had been no great consumption of it since Bussaco, or the state of the army would have been perilous indeed, since it had to depend on what it had originally brought down from Spain in September. No more had been received, and attempts to establish a powder factory at Santarem failed for lack of saltpetre. If Masséna had been forced to fight two or three general engagements, his stores would have been so depleted that he would have had to abscond at once, lest the army should be left without cartridges. Meanwhile he hung on to his position, conscious that his power of endurance was

[1] See Colonel Noël's account of his food-getting and his stores, *Souvenirs militaires*, pp. 128–9.

[2] See Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs*, pp. 106–7.

limited, but hoping at any moment to see reinforcements break through from the north or the east, to refill his ranks and bring him the needful convoys.

Of military operations, as opposed to mere raids by detachments in search of food, hardly anything was undertaken by the Army of Portugal down to the end of the year. Between the 22nd and the 29th of December, General Ferey, with five battalions and a cavalry regiment, carried out a useless excursion beyond the Zezere, into the desolate region of Castello Branco as far as Cortiçada; apparently he had been sent out because of rumours that a French force was operating in this direction, and he was told to get into touch with it. But these reports were idle—they were tardy echoes of Gardanne's unhappy march on the Estrada Nova[1] a full month before. The brigade returned, wearied and more than half-starved, on the seventh day, equally destitute of news and of the plunder that it had hoped to find in a hitherto untouched district. The only fruitful action, indeed, which the French carried out in this month was the completion of the great bridge-equipage at the mouth of the Zezere, which Masséna had ordered General Eblé to construct many weeks back[2]. His object was to have at his disposition means for crossing the Tagus, in case he should wish to invade the Alemtejo, or to co-operate with any friendly troops that might appear from that direction. Originally he had intended to make Santarem his crossing-point, but, after some boats had been built there, with immense difficulties owing to the entire lack of appliances, he determined that the place was too near the British lines, and too much exposed to attacks by Wellington's river flotilla. Obviously a serious attempt to cross the Tagus near Santarem, even if its initial stages succeeded, and the larger part of the army got over, would expose the rear divisions to almost certain destruction, since Wellington could throw 30,000 men upon them within the next twelve hours. There is no more certain way of ruining an army than to allow it to be caught divided into two halves by a broad river spanned by one or two precarious bridges. On the other hand, the mouth of the Zezere was very remote from Wellington's main

[1] See vol. iii. pp. 470–1.

[2] See vol. iii. pp. 450–1.

army, and a crossing made opposite to it could only be opposed by a part of Beresford's force, which was not very large, and was spread along fifty miles of the river front. Moreover, the corps executing the passage would not have any great danger on its flank or rear, since there was only the Portuguese garrison of Abrantes to molest it. It was an additional advantage that a bridge-equipage at Punhete could be kept in perfect safety a mile or two up the Zezere, out of range of guns on the further bank of the Tagus, and could be floated down at the last moment: while at Santarem the boats had to be stored on the actual bank of the Tagus, exposed to attacks from the side of the water by Wellington's gun-boats. One effort to sink or fire them by a bombardment and the use of Congreve rockets had already been made[1].

Accordingly Masséna resolved that if he made any attempt to cross into the Alemtejo, he would take Punhete and the estuary of the Zezere as his starting-point. Here he established his dockyard, and hither he transferred most of the busy workers from Santarem. In the course of a month they got ready for him the materials for two bridges broad enough to span the Tagus, besides ninety flat-bottomed boats. The mouth of the Zezere was protected by a number of batteries, to keep down the fire of any guns that Beresford might bring up to sink the bridges when they were being cast across.

These preparations did not long escape Wellington's notice; he saw that the ground opposite Punhete was the most crucial point in Beresford's long front, and bade him close up his troops toward it. The detachment beyond the Tagus was reinforced by a Spanish brigade under Carlos de España, drawn from La Romana's army, which was placed at Barca just opposite the mouth of the Zezere, with William Stewart's brigade of the 2nd Division close by at Santa Margarida, Tramagal, and Pinheiros. Three batteries were established on the Tagus bank opposite Punhete, and armed with six-pounders; but as these were overmatched by the French guns across the water, nine-pounders were requisitioned from Lisbon[2]. The rest of the

[1] See vol. iii. p. 462.

[2] For details see D'Urban's diary, January 1, 4, and 5, 1811. The

2nd Division and Hamilton's two Portuguese brigades were to be ready to march to support Carlos de España and Stewart at the shortest notice. These dispositions were sufficient to keep Masséna quiet; he had no real intention of crossing the Tagus unless he heard of Soult's approach from the direction of the Alemtejo [1].

On that side all was tranquil—as indeed it was destined to remain for many a week more. But just at the end of the month of December the isolation in which the Army of Portugal had so long been living at last came to an end, and reinforcements and news were at last received, though the news was disheartening and the reinforcements inadequate. On the 26th the reconnoitring party under General Marcognet, which had just beaten up Wilson's quarters at Espinhal, was surprised by the appearance of a party of regular cavalry pushing towards them on the road from Ponte de Murcella. The uniforms were soon seen to be those of French dragoons, and a joyful meeting took place [2]. The newcomers announced that they were the advanced guard of Drouet's 9th Corps, which was pushing down the valley of the Mondego in search of the Army of Portugal, but had no exact knowledge of where it was to be found.

The 9th Corps, it will be remembered, was a promiscuous assembly of some twenty newly-raised fourth battalions, belonging to the regiments which were already in Spain. Eleven were fractions of corps serving in Soult's Army of Andalusia, five of regiments of Ney's 6th Corps, the rest of units under Reynier's and Junot's command. Drouet had been originally ordered to do no more than conduct these battalions, which were little better than a mass of drafts, to join the regiments to which they belonged. They were divided into two provisional divisions under Generals Conroux and Claparéde. Thrust, as it were, into Spain without any regular organization, destitute of battalion transport, and with an improvised and insufficient staff,

French batteries on the first day shelled Carlos de España's cantonments across the river, but with no effect.

[1] So Fririon in his *Campagne de Portugal*, p. 128.

[2] There is a description of the meeting in the diary of Ney's aide-de-camp Sprünglin, who was in command of the party which actually met D'Erlon's dragoons, p. 460.

they had made very slow progress since they crossed the Pyrenees, mainly owing to difficulties of commissariat. When Foy passed Salamanca on November 10th, the head of Claparéde's division had only just entered that city; the tail of the corps was struggling up from Valladolid and Burgos. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Claparéde only reached the neighbourhood of Almèida on the 15th of November, and that Drouet had not concentrated his whole force at that place till December 14th. He had about 16,000 men, having left three of his own battalions to garrison Ciudad Rodrigo, and picked up instead the remains of Gardanne's column, which had retreated on to the Spanish frontier in such disorder at the end of the preceding month[1]. This detachment, by reason of its losses during its disastrous flight, had been reduced to about 1,400 men fit for service—about the same number that Drouet had left behind him from his own corps. Drouet was acting under stringent orders from the Emperor to move forward at the earliest possible moment[2], and open up communication with Masséna. His original instructions had been to go no further forward than Almeida himself, but to send a column under Gardanne, 6,000 strong, to clear and keep open the way to the Tagus. The march and failure of Gardanne have been already related, and Drouet saw that to carry out the Emperor's orders he must use a larger force. At the same time his dispatches told him that he must at all costs keep in touch with Almeida, and not merely join Masséna and allow himself to be cut off from Spain[3].

Drouet's solution of the problem was that with Conroux's division and Gardanne's detachment, some 8,000 men, he would march down the Mondego by Celorico and Ponte de Murcella, and cut his way to join Masséna, but that he would leave his second division under Claparéde behind him, about Celorico and Trancoso, to keep in touch with Almeida and maintain his communications. This was about as much as could be done to carry

[1] See vol. iii. p. 481.

[2] Napoleon to Berthier, November 3 and November 20, *Correspondance*, 17,079 and 17,141.

[3] 'Qu'il rouvre avec un gros corps les communications avec le prince d'Essling, mais que je compte, du reste, sur sa prudence de ne pas se laisser couper d'Almeida.' Napoleon to Berthier, November 20.

out Napoleon's instructions, which were essentially impossible to execute. For the Portuguese militia, with which the 9th Corps had to deal, were, when properly managed, a very intangible enemy, who could retire whenever a column passed, and return to block the way when it had gone by. It is impossible to see how Drouet could have kept open the whole road from Almeida to Thomar, without leaving all along the way a couple of battalions, entrenched in a good position, at distances of fifteen or twenty miles from each other. And if he had done this, he would have had no force left at the moment when he joined Masséna. It was useless for Napoleon to tell him in one breath to keep the road open from end to end, and in the next to forbid him to make any small detachments[1]. But the Emperor neither fully understood the military situation in Portugal, nor grasped the relative merits of its roads or the relative resources of its various regions. In a dispatch sent out to Masséna on December 4th (but not delivered till February) he advised that Marshal to try to open his communications with Spain by the awful mountain road from the Zezere by Cardigos and Belmonte to Guarda, and at the same time to use the desolate Castello Branco country 'pour faire des vivres.' Ferey's fruitless expedition up that very road and into that very region, carried out a fortnight before the Emperor's dispatch was even written, had sufficiently proved the futility of the suggestion.

But to return to Drouet: he left Almeida on December 14th, and crossed the Coa with both his divisions and Gardanne's detachment. The only enemy near him was Silveira, who with his six militia regiments and the reorganized 24th of the Line (the absconding garrison of Almeida, which had eluded its forced oath to Masséna in the preceding autumn[2]) was lying at Trancoso. To that place the Portuguese general had retired (abandoning the blockade of Almeida) when the 9th Corps arrived on the frontier. Of the other militia brigades of the north Miller with four battalions was at Vizeu, Trant with seven at Coimbra; Baccelar, the Commander-in-Chief, lay at Oporto with the small remainder.

Drouet, copying Masséna's first dispositions in the preceding

[1] 'Il est donc important qu'il ne fasse point de petits pacquets.' Ibid.

[2] See vol. iii. p. 276.

autumn, marched from Almeida in two columns; he himself took the high road by Celorico; Claparéde was sent along the more difficult mountain route by Trancoso, which place Silveira evacuated on his approach. At Celorico Drouet cut himself loose from his lieutenant, who (in accordance with Napoleon's orders) was to stay behind, to remain in touch with Almeida, and (vain thought!) to keep open the communications. Taking Conroux and Gardanne with him, he marched south of the Mondego, past Chamusca and Moita, as far as Ponte de Murcella, which he reached on the 24th. He met with no opposition, for Baccelar, anxious only for Oporto, had told Silveira to keep in front of Claparéde, and Miller to stay at Vizeu, but both to be ready to fall back on Oporto if Drouet's advance turned out to have that city as its objective. Similarly Trant was to hold on to Coimbra unless the French column took the northern road, in which case he too might be called back to Oporto [1]. Between Drouet, therefore, and Masséna's army there was only left the weak brigade of John Wilson at Espinhal, and this force had been driven out of its usual position by Marcognet's flying column on November 23rd, and had retired to Peñacova beyond the Mondego, below the heights of Bussaco. On the 26th Drouet's advance cavalry came into touch with Marcognet, as has been already related, at Espinhal, just as the latter was preparing to retire to Thomar, with the report that there was nothing stirring in the north.

Thus Drouet's 8,000 men came into the sphere of Masséna's operations; but he did not at first seem to realize the fact. He sent on Gardanne's detachment (which mostly belonged to the 2nd Corps) to join the Marshal, but halted Conroux's division at Espinhal, and only went forward in person as far as Thomar, where he stopped for two days conferring with Ney. Instead of reporting himself to Masséna, he merely sent on a dispatch, to say that he had opened the communications, and was under orders from the Emperor to keep them safe. With this purpose he intended to return to the Mondego, and get back into touch with Claparéde. Masséna was in no small degree irritated at this pretension of Drouet to act as an independent commander, and sent him a peremptory order to come to head quarters to

[1] These dispositions are given in D'Urban's unpublished diary.

make his report, and to send on Conroux's division from Espinhal to occupy Leiria. After some slight friction Drouet obeyed. The communications with Almeida, re-established for a moment, were thus broken again after four days, for John Wilson, the instant that Conroux began to break up from Espinhal, came boldly back towards that place, attacked the French rearguard on December 30th, and, after doing it some little harm, blocked the high-road to the north once more [1]. Drouet was completely cut off from Claparéde, and his arrival brought no profit to Masséna beyond his 8,000 men and the moderate train of ammunition which he had escorted. It was not with such a reinforcement that the Marshal could hope to resume the offensive. Indeed, as Wellington sagely remarked [2], if nothing more came up to join him, his retreat looked more certain and necessary than ever.

While Drouet was on the march to Leiria, his lieutenant, Claparéde, the moment that he was no longer under his superior's eye, had gone off on a bold and rather hazardous raid of his own. Finding that Silveira's militia were sticking closely to his skirts, he resolved to make an attempt to surprise them by a forced march. Concentrating at Trancoso on December 30th, he fell upon the enemy on the following day at Ponte do Abbade, and routed them with a loss of 200 men. Silveira, notwithstanding this check, adhered to his orders to keep close to Claparéde, and retired no further than Villa da Ponte, some seven miles away. But the French general made a second sudden sally from Trancoso on January 11th [3], beat the Portuguese much more decisively, and pursued them as far as Lamego on the Douro. Silveira crossed the river in great disorder on the 13th, and the news of his defeat brought terror to Oporto. Baccelar at once ordered not only the brigade from Vizeu (Miller was just dead and no longer commanded it), but Trant from Coimbra, and Wilson from Peñacova, to fall back and join him.

[1] For Wilson's movements I have his letters to Trant and D'Urban of January 3, 1811—the one in D'Urban's correspondence, the other in the Trant papers lent me by Captain Chambers, R.N.

[2] Wellington to Hill, Dispatches, vii. p. 86, Dec. 30, 1810.

[3] Chaby, ii. p. 272, gives January 5th as the date of the combat of Villa da Ponte, but all the other authorities place it on the 11th.

They concentrated at Castro Daire, ten miles south of Lamego, with a force of 14,000 bayonets, whereupon Claparéde, who had only 6,000 men with him, began to fear that he would be cut off from Almeida and isolated in a difficult position. He evacuated Lamego and returned to Trancoso by forced marches, having accomplished nothing save the destruction of a few hundred militia and the spreading of panic as far as Oporto (January 18th)[1]. Shortly after he left Trancoso and moved southward to Celorico and Guarda[2], where he commanded the two roads to the Tagus, yet was not too far from Almeida and his base. But he was still completely cut off from Masséna, and the Portuguese at once resumed their old positions around him —Trant returning to Coimbra, Wilson to Peñacova on the Mondego, while Baccelar with the reserves lay more to the rear, at São Pedro do Sul on the Vouga. Claparéde's movement would have been dangerous for the allies if he had possessed a heavier force, but 6,000 men were too few for a serious march on Oporto, and if the column had not retreated in haste it would probably have suffered complete disaster.

The only use which Masséna could make of Drouet and the division of Conroux was to cover more ground for foraging by their means. When placed at Leiria they much restricted the activities of Blunt at Peniche and Trant at Coimbra, who could no longer push their advanced posts so far to the front, and had to cede to the enemy all the land about the Souré and Alcoa rivers. Here Drouet collected enough food both to feed himself and to give help to Ney; but the resources of the district were, after all, limited, and within a few weeks the men of the 9th Corps were living on the edge of daily starvation like their fellows. The Army of Portugal had got no solid help from this quarter. It remained to be seen whether they would obtain better aid from the other side from which Masséna had hoped to be reinforced—the Army of Andalusia.

[1] According to Thiébault, then commanding at Salamanca, Claparéde's rather wild excursion was due to mere desire for plunder; he accuses him of having raised, and put into his private purse, great contributions at Moimento, Lamego, and other towns which he occupied for a few days. (*Mémoires*, iv. 422–3.)

[2] Date uncertain, perhaps January 22, as Wellington knew he was there on January 26.

SECTION XXIII: CHAPTER II

SOULT'S EXPEDITION INTO ESTREMADURA. JANUARY–MARCH 1811. THE BATTLE OF THE GEBORA AND THE FALL OF BADAJOZ

In his original scheme for the invasion of Portugal, Napoleon had given no part to the Army of Andalusia, judging that Masséna, supported by the 9th Corps, would be amply strong enough to drive the English into the sea. It is not till the 29th of September that the imperial correspondence begins to show signs of a desire that Soult should do something to help the Army of Portugal. But the assistance which was to be given is defined, in the dispatch of that date, as no more than a diversion to be made against Estremadura by Mortier and the 5th Corps, with the object of preventing La Romana from giving any aid to Wellington[1]. Soult is directed to see that Mortier keeps the Spanish Army of Estremadura in check: he is always to be on its heels, so that it will have no opportunity of sending troops towards the Tagus. Nothing is said about making a serious attack on Estremadura, or of threatening Badajoz with a siege. On the 26th of October comes the next allusion to this subject[2]: the Emperor had learnt from the English newspapers—always his best source of intelligence—that La Romana with a large part of his forces has marched on Lisbon to join Wellington, and that he has been able to do so without molestation. That this should have happened was, he thought, due to direct disobedience on Soult's part: the Marshal cannot have kept in touch with the enemy. And he is directed in vague terms to 'faire pousser sur La Romana,' whatever exactly that may mean. An interpretation for the phrase,

[1] The Emperor to Berthier, September 29, no. 16,967 of the *Correspondance de Napoléon.*

[2] Not in the *Correspondance,* but in the form of a letter from Berthier to Soult, which Soult answers at great length in his Dispatch from Seville of December 1.

however, turns up in the next imperial dispatch[1]—Mortier and the 5th Corps ought to have followed the Spanish general march for march, and to have presented themselves on the Lower Tagus in face of Lisbon shortly after the arrival of La Romana in the Portuguese capital.

Soult had little difficulty in proving that this scheme was absolutely impossible. It argued, indeed, a complete misconception of the situation in Estremadura and Andalusia. To talk lightly of pushing Mortier and the 5th Corps, which comprised at this moment just 13,000 men, right across Estremadura to the mouth of the Tagus, 'en talonnant La Romana,' was futile. The Spanish General had gone off to join Wellington with some 7,000 or 8,000 men. But he had left behind him in Estremadura two strong infantry divisions, those of Mendizabal and Ballasteros, with 12,000 bayonets, 6,000 more infantry in garrison at Badajoz, Olivenza, and Albuquerque, and the whole of his cavalry, 2,500 sabres. In addition there were interposed between Mortier and the Tagus about 8,500 Portuguese—a cavalry brigade under Madden which had been lent to the Spaniards, and, near Badajoz, a regular infantry brigade at Elvas, and four militia regiments, forming the garrisons of the last-named place, of Campo Mayor, and of Jerumenha. That is to say, there lay before Mortier, after La Romana's departure, a field army which, if concentrated, would make up 18,000 men, and in addition six fortresses containing garrisons amounting to 11,000 men more, and covering all the main strategical points of the country. How could he have pursued La Romana? If he had followed, he would have found himself at once involved in a campaign against superior forces in a region studded with hostile strongholds. 'On this frontier,' as Soult wrote to Berthier, 'there are six fortified places—Badajoz, Olivenza, Jerumenha, Elvas, Campo Mayor, Albuquerque, in which there are at least 20,000 infantry and 2,500 cavalry. It is clear to me that if I thrust a body of 10,000 men forward to the Tagus, as his majesty has directed, that body would never reach its

[1] 'Le 5e Corps, au lieu de suivre La Romana, et par là de menacer la rive gauche du Tage vis-à-vis de Lisbonne (pour empêcher les Anglais d'avoir toutes leurs forces sur la rive droite), s'est replié honteusement sur Séville.' *Correspondance*, no. 17,131.

destination, and would be cut off and surrounded before I could get up to its aid[1].' This was indisputably correct: Mortier might have beaten Mendizabal and Ballasteros in the open field, if they chose to offer him battle; but if they preferred to concentrate on Badajoz or Elvas, and defied him from under the shadow of those great fortresses, he could not ignore them and march by in pursuit of La Romana. The moment that he was past their positions, they would cut him off from Andalusia, and he would find himself with their whole force at his back, and in front of him anything that Wellington might have sent to the south bank of the Tagus. In December this would have meant 14,000 men under Hill, at the New Year about 16,000 under Beresford. As Soult truly said, the expedition would have been encompassed, and probably destroyed, long before Masséna heard of its having got anywhere near him[2]. Nevertheless the

[1] Soult to Berthier, no. 24 in Appendix to *Belmas*, vol. i. p. 472.

[2] The total of the troops available against Mortier in December would have been, giving net totals, with sick and detached men all deducted :—

Spanish:	
Ballasteros's Division	5,000
Mendizabal's Division	6,000
Permanent garrison of Badajoz	4,200
5 battalions left behind by La Romana at Albuquerque, Olivenza, &c.	2,000
Carlos de España's brigade on the Tagus near Abrantes	1,500
Cavalry of the Army of Estremadura	2,600
Artillery	500
Portuguese:	
Brigade of Line Regiments, Nos. 5 and 17, at Elvas	2,500
Brigade of Cavalry under Madden, 3rd, 5th, 8th regiments	950
Hamilton's Division (with Hill), 2nd, 4th, 10th, 14th Line	4,800
Portuguese Militia, 4 regiments, Beja, Evora, Villa Viciosa, Portalegre, in Elvas, Jerumenha, and Campo Mayor	4,000
5th Caçadores (with Hill)	450
Fane's Cavalry (with Hill), 1st, 4th, 7th, 10th regiments	1,200
Artillery (4 batteries)	600
British:	
Hill's Second Division	5,250
13th Light Dragoons	350
Artillery (3 batteries)	400
Total	42,300

Mortier had in the 5th Corps 11,500 infantry, 1,200 cavalry, and about 700 artillery in his 7 batteries.

Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Portugal was told to expect this diversion as a matter of certainty: in the dispatch that Foy took back to him (dated Dec. 4) he was given the precise statement that the 5th Corps was to be looked for somewhere in the direction of Montalvão and Villaflor, on the Tagus above Abrantes, at no distant date.

After having, as he thought, demonstrated to his master that it would be useless to send Mortier alone, with 10,000 or 12,000 men, to make an impossible dash at the Tagus, Soult made another proposal. He would undertake not a mere raid, but the capture of Badajoz, the conquest of Estremadura, and the destruction of the army of that province; but he must take with him a force much greater than the mere 5th Corps. 'The enterprise is a big one, but ought to succeed—at least it will produce a happy diversion in favour of the imperial army in Portugal[1].' It would call back La Romana from Lisbon, and possibly cause Wellington to detach troops in his aid, and Masséna would have less in front of him in consequence, and might resume the offensive.

There was of course another course possible: Soult might have marched for Estremadura not with the 13,000 men of the 5th Corps alone, nor yet with the 20,000 men whom he actually took thither in January, but with the greater part of the French Army of Andalusia, 35,000 or 40,000 men. To do so he would have had to abandon Granada, Malaga, and Jaen on the one side, and his hold on the Condado de Niebla and the west upon the other. He might even possibly have had to raise the siege of Cadiz, though this is not quite certain. Many months after, in the end of March, when all chance of the conquest of Portugal was over, the Emperor told him that this would have been his proper course, and read him an *ex-post-facto* lecture on the advantages that might have followed, if he had evacuated two-thirds of his viceroyalty and taken an imposing force to sweep across the Alemtejo and assail Lisbon from the southern side[2].

[1] Soult to Berthier, December 1, 1810, from Seville.

[2] This dispatch of March 29 (Nap. *Corresp.*, no. 17,531), which must have reached Soult about the end of April, when Masséna had long retired to Spain, told him that he should have withdrawn all the 4th Corps from Granada save the six Polish battalions, and have drawn in Godinot's

But it must be remembered that in December and January all the orders that were sent him directed him to move no more than a small corps—in one dispatch the Emperor calls it only 10,000 men. A supreme commander-in-chief present on the spot might have seen his way to make the temporary sacrifice of the provinces which had cost so many men to conquer and to hold, in order that every available man might be sent against Lisbon, and the English might at last be expelled from the Peninsula. But Soult was not such a commander-in-chief; he was only one of the many viceroys whom Napoleon preferred to a single omnipotent lieutenant. Was it likely that he would sacrifice half his own territory, when no order to do so lay before him, in order that a colleague, sent on a separate task with forces no less than his own, might have every possible advantage? Soult is often blamed for not having seen that the crushing of Wellington's army was the end to which all others should have been subordinated, and that it would have been cheap in the end to surrender half or three-quarters of Andalusia, and even to raise the siege of Cadiz, in order to secure that point. He might have replied that his master was no less blind than himself: dispatch after dispatch had ordered him to send a trifling detachment towards the Tagus, not to mass every available man and march on Lisbon, leaving Seville and the Cadiz lines exposed to all manner of dangers. He was primarily responsible for the retention of the Andalusia that he had conquered; it was for the Emperor, not for himself, to order the evacuation of much or all of that great realm. The Emperor gave no such directions: from September to January his whole series of dispatches spoke of nothing more than the movement of a moderate force; those of January 25th and February 6th approved of the course which Soult had actually chosen, and took it for granted that he would not move towards the Tagus till he should have captured Badajoz[1]. It was not till March, when he began to

brigade from Cordova, i. e. have abandoned the whole eastern half of Andalusia, and have tried to hold nothing but the siege lines of Cadiz and the city of Seville. But this was 'wisdom after the event.' In December Napoleon was harping upon a diversion with 10,000 men to Montalvão and Villaflor, not ordering the evacuation of the greater part of Andalusia.

[1] January 25, Napoleon to Berthier, 'Il est nécessaire d'écrire au duc

see that all his arrangements were going wrong, and that his scheme of times was erroneous, that the Emperor began suddenly to launch out into criticisms of Soult, and to complain that 'to try to hold every point at a moment of crisis leads to possible disaster,' that 'Seville, Badajoz, and the Cadiz lines were the only necessary things,' and that the Marshal ought to have 30,000 men or more with him at Badajoz instead of the 20,000 men whom he had actually taken thither [1]. If so, why had the orders not been given to that effect early in December, when Napoleon had just learnt from Foy the state and position of the Army of Portugal, which had so long been hidden from him behind Wellington's screen of Ordenança?

If we seek deep enough, we find the cause of all misdirections in the fact that the Emperor persisted in guiding the movements of all his army from Paris, and would not appoint an independent commander-in-chief of all the Spanish armies, who should be able to issue orders that would be promptly obeyed by every separate marshal or general in each province. A moment's reflection shows that the *data* as to the details of the situation in the Peninsula, from which Napoleon had to construct his scheme of operations, always came to him a month late. And when he had issued the dispatch which dealt with the situation, it reached its destination after the interval of another month, and had long ceased to have any bearing on the actual position of affairs. A single example of how the system worked may suffice. Masséna started Foy for Paris, with his great report on the state of the Army of Portugal, on October 29. Foy reached Paris and saw the Emperor on November 22 and the succeeding days. The detailed dispatches to Masséna and Soult, consequent on Foy's report, were not sent off till December 4.

de Dalmatie *qu'après la prise de Badajoz* il doit se porter sur le Tage, avec son équipage de pont, et donner les moyens au prince d'Essling d'assiéger et prendre Abrantès.' *Correspondance*, no. 17,295.

February 5, Napoleon to Berthier, 'Écrivez au duc d'Istrie (Bessières, now commanding the new "Army of the North") . . . que tout paraît prendre une couleur avantageuse, que si Badajoz a été pris dans le courant de Janvier, le duc de Dalmatie a pu se porter sur le Tage.' [Unfortunately Badajoz did not surrender till March 11, and Soult was extremely lucky to get it so early.] *Correspondance*, no. 17,335.

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, March 29, *Correspondance*, no. 17,531.

On January 22nd Soult acknowledges the receipt of the dispatch of that date, along with that of two others dated November 28 and December 10, all of which arrived together, because the guerrilleros of La Mancha had stopped the posts between Madrid and Seville for a full fortnight after the New Year[1]. Of what value to Soult on January 22 could be orders based on the condition and projects of Masséna on October 29? The data at the base of the orders were three months old—while Soult had been already for more than a month engaged on a campaign undertaken on his own responsibility, without any knowledge of the exact requirements of Masséna, or of the intentions of the Emperor.

The Estremaduran expedition of January–March 1811, therefore, must be looked upon as the private scheme of the Duke of Dalmatia[2], undertaken with the general object of giving *indirect* assistance to Masséna, because the last orders that he had received from Paris (those of October 26), telling him to give *direct* assistance, by sending Mortier to the Tagus, were impossible of execution[3]. Soult had two leading ideas in his mind when he planned out his campaign. The first was that he was going into a country thickly set with fortresses; the second was that, when once the skirts of the Sierra Morena have been passed, Estremadura is a 'cavalry country,' a land of heaths and of unenclosed tillage-fields of vast area. Accordingly he intended to march with a very large force of cavalry, and with a heavy siege-train. At Seville he had at his disposition the greatest arsenal of Spain; but for many months all that it produced had been going forward to Cadiz: no less than 290 pieces had been sent to arm the vast lines in front of the blockaded city. Accordingly it took some time to get ready the heavy guns, and to manufacture the ammunition required for such a big business as the siege of the six fortresses,

[1] Soult to Berthier, from the siege lines in front of Olivenza, dated January 22.

[2] He calls it 'la détermination que j'avais prise sur de simples avis indirects.' To Berthier, January 25.

[3] For the explanation of all this see Soult to Berthier, already quoted, from Seville, December 1, acknowledging the receipt of the imperial orders of October 26th.

small and great, into whose midst he was about to thrust himself. The personnel for the siege-train had also to be collected: requisitions were sent, both to Victor at Cadiz and to Sebastiani at Granada, to detach and send into Seville nearly all their sappers, and the men of several companies of artillery. They were also to send to the expeditionary force many regiments of cavalry. Mortier had only two (10th Hussars and 21st Chasseurs), which had sufficed when he was engaged in the heights of the Sierra Morena, but were insufficient when he was about to descend into the plain of the Guadiana. Accordingly half the cavalry of Victor's 1st Corps was called up—four regiments (4th, 14th, 26th Dragoons, 2nd Hussars), while Sebastiani gave up one (27th Chasseurs); to these was added an experimental Spanish cavalry regiment of 'Juramentados' recently organized at Seville. Only one infantry regiment was requisitioned, the 63rd Line, from Victor's 3rd Division. The putting together of these resources gave a force in which the proportions of the arms were very peculiar—4,000 cavalry, 2,000 artillery and sappers, to only 13,500 infantry; the last, all save the above-mentioned 63rd regiment, drawn from Mortier's 5th Corps. The orders for the concentration of the troops were issued early in December, but owing to the time required for drawing in units from Granada and Cadiz, and for the preparation of the siege-train, it was not till the last day of the old year that the Marshal took his departure from Seville.

The collection of a field army of 20,000 men, which was to cut itself loose from Andalusia for a time, imposed some tiresome problems on Soult. Since he had resolved not to evacuate Granada or Malaga on the one hand, nor the posts west of the Guadalquivir on the other, and since he was drawing off the 5th Corps, which had hitherto provided for the safety of Seville and found detachments for the Condado de Niebla, he had to make provision for the filling of the gap left behind him. Hence we find him calling upon Victor to spare men from in front of Cadiz—a demand which the Duke of Belluno took very ill—since he truly declared that he had no more troops in the 1st Corps than sufficed to man the lines and to keep posts of observation in his rear. The garrison of Cadiz was always increasing, and included a strong nucleus of British troops.

How could he face sorties, or disembarkations in his rear, if he was cut down to a mere 18,000 men in place of the 24,000 on which he had hitherto reckoned? Nevertheless, he was forced to provide a detachment to hold Xeres, as a half-way house to Seville, and to send out a cavalry regiment (9th Dragoons) and one battalion west of the Guadalquivir. Similarly, the brigade of Godinot in the kingdom of Cordova[1] was required to find a skeleton garrison for Seville, which was raised to a somewhat higher figure, in appearance, by the doubtful aid of some 'juramentado' companies of Spaniards, and of the dépôts and convalescents of the 5th Corps. The great city, with a turbulent population of 100,000 souls, which formed the centre of his viceroyalty, became at this time Soult's weakest point—he left it so inadequately held that it was at the mercy of any considerable hostile force which might approach it—and such a force was ere long, as we shall see, to make its appearance. Godinot had also to look after the insurgent bands of the central Sierra Morena, who often blocked the post road to Madrid. Sebastiani (save for the cavalry and artillery borrowed from him) was left with his 4th Corps intact, and his duty was unchanged—to watch the Spanish army of Murcia, and to suppress the guerrilleros of the Sierra de Ronda and the eastern coast—an unending task from which Soult thought that he ought not to be distracted. Napoleon, wise after the event, wrote in March that Soult should have left no more than the Polish division of the 4th Corps in the direction of Granada, and have brought the remainder of it to strengthen or support the troops at Seville and in the lines before Cadiz. In that case the Poles would certainly have had to move westward also ere long, since there were but 5,000 of them, and all Eastern Andalusia would have had to be evacuated. But this idea had never struck Soult as practicable, and Sebastiani's whole corps was left in its old posts in the kingdom of Granada.

The invasion of Estremadura was carried out in two columns of about equal strength, which used the two main passes between Western Andalusia and the valley of the Guadiana.

[1] Belonging to that division of the Army of the Centre under Dessolles which Soult had borrowed for the conquest of Andalusia, and which King Joseph, despite of many demands, could never get back.

The right column under Latour-Maubourg took the route by Guadalcanal, Llerena, and Usagre; it was composed of his own regiments of dragoons from the 1st Corps, and of Girard's infantry division of the 5th Corps, which latter had been cantoned in Llerena since the autumn, and was now picked up and taken forward by the cavalry. The left column, which was accompanied both by Soult and by Mortier, was composed of Briche's light cavalry and Gazan's division of the 5th Corps. It had to escort the slowly moving siege-train of 34 guns, which (with the 60,000 kilos of powder belonging to it) was drawn by 2,500 draught oxen, requisitioned along with their drivers from the province of Seville. This column took the route Ronquillo, Sta Ollala, Monasterio, which, if less steep and better made than the Llerena-Guadalcanal road, is longer, and passes through an even more desolate and resourceless country. It was intended that the two columns should join at Los Santos or Almendralejo, in the Estremaduran plain, and lay siege at once to Badajoz, the enemy's most formidable stronghold. Its fall, so Soult hoped, would lead to the easy conquest of the minor fortresses.

But the two columns did not meet with equal fortune. That commanded by Latour-Maubourg met practically no resistance in its first stages. On arriving at Usagre on January 3, it found in its front almost the whole of the allied cavalry in Estremadura—Butron with 1,500 Spaniards, Madden with nearly 1,000 Portuguese. But this was merely a screen thrown out to cover the retreat beyond the Guadiana of Mendizabal and the division of Spanish infantry which had been cantoned in this region. That officer had been ordered by his chief, La Romana, to break the bridge of Merida, after retiring over it, and then to attempt to hold the line of the Guadiana. He did neither; precipitately marching on Merida, he passed through it in great haste, but forgot to see that the bridge was duly destroyed, and then retired along the north bank of the Guadiana to Badajoz. Latour-Maubourg, according to his directions, did not cross the river, but halted near Almendralejo, to wait for the other column, which was not forthcoming. Only Soult himself and Briche's light cavalry appeared at Zafra on the 5th, and joined Latour-Maubourg on the 6th of January.

Gazan's infantry and the siege-train were far away, and unavailable for many a day. The plans of the left invading column had miscarried. For when its head reached Monasterio, at the summit of the long pass, its tail, the siege-train, was dragging far behind. In the desolate stages about Ronquillo and Sta Olalla it had met with tempestuous rains, as might have been expected at the season. Many of the oxen died, the unwilling Spanish drivers deserted wholesale, and there was much delay and considerable loss of vehicles. The train and its small escort got completely separated from Gazan's infantry. At this moment Soult's cavalry reported to him that a formidable column of hostile infantry was lying a few miles to the west of Monasterio, on the bad cross-road to Calera, and was apparently moving round his flank, either to fall upon the belated convoy or perhaps to make a dash at Seville.

This column was the 5,000 infantry of Ballasteros, who, as it chanced, had begun to march southward at the same moment that Soult had started northward. The Spanish general had just received orders from Cadiz bidding him cut himself loose from the Estremaduran army, and move into the Condado de Niebla, where he was to unite with the local levies under Copons, drive out the weak French detachment there stationed, and threaten Seville from the west if it should be practicable. These orders had been given, of course, before Soult's plan for invading Estremadura was suspected at Cadiz. But though unwise in themselves—it was not the time to deplete Estremadura of troops—they had the effect of bringing Soult's great manœuvre to a standstill for some weeks. The Marshal determined that he must free his flank from this threatening force before continuing his march, and ordered Mortier to attack Ballasteros without delay. This was done, but the Spaniard, after a running fight of two hours, retired to Fregenal, fifteen miles further west, without suffering any serious harm (January 4th). He was still in a position to threaten the rear of the convoy, or to slip round the flank of the French column towards Seville. Soult therefore resolved to go on with his cavalry and join Latour-Maubourg, but to drop Gazan's infantry in the passes, with the order to head off Ballasteros at all costs, and to cover the siege-train in its journey across the mountains.

Gazan therefore took post at Fuentes de Leon, but soon heard that Ballasteros had moved south again from Fregenal towards the Chanza river, and was apparently trying to get round his flank. Leaving a detachment to help the convoy on its slow and toilsome route, Gazan resolved to pursue the Spanish column and destroy it at all costs. This determination led him into three weeks of desperate mountain-marching and semi-starvation, at the worst season of the year. For Ballasteros, who showed considerable skill in drawing his enemy on, moved ever south and west towards the lower Guadiana, and picked up Copons's levies by the way. He at last turned to fight at Villanueva de los Castillejos on January 24th. Gazan, who had been joined meanwhile by the small French detachment in the Condado de Niebla, brought his enemy to action on the 25th. The Asturian battalions which formed Ballasteros's division made a creditable resistance, and when evicted from their position retired across the Guadiana to Alcoutim in Portugal, without having suffered any overwhelming loss[1]. Gazan therefore resolved to pursue them no further—indeed he had been drawn down into one of the remotest corners of Spain to little profit, and realized that Soult must be brought to a standstill one hundred miles away, for want of the 6,000 infantry who had now been executing their toilsome excursion in the mountains for three weeks.

Accordingly, the French general bade Remond, the commander of the Niebla detachment, watch Ballasteros, and himself returned to Estremadura by a most painful march through Puebla de Guzman, El Cerro, Fregenal, and Xeres de los Caballeros. He reported his return to Soult at Valverde on February 3rd. His services had been lost to his chief for a month all but two days, a fact which had the gravest results on the general course of the campaign of Estremadura[2].

[1] Certainly not with the loss of 1,500 men as Gazan alleged, still less with that of 3,000 as stated by Napier.

[2] By far the best account of this wild excursion is to be found in La Mare's account of the Estremaduran Campaign of 1811–12 (Paris, 1825). Toreño exaggerates the losses of the French, which cannot have been heavy, as Martinien's *Liste des officiers tués*, &c., shows only two or three casualties in Gazan's division.

For the Duke of Dalmatia, when he had joined Latour-Maubourg on January 6th, found that he had at his disposition 4,000 cavalry but only the 6,000 infantry of Girard, while the siege-train was still blocked in the passes by Monasterio. With such a force he did not like to beleaguer a place so large and so heavily garrisoned as Badajoz. Accordingly, he was forced to abandon his original intention of forming its siege, and to think of some lesser enterprise, more suited to his strength. After some hesitation, he determined to attack the weak and old-fashioned fortress of Olivenza, the southernmost of all the fortified places on the Spanish-Portuguese frontier. To cover his movement he sent Briche's cavalry to Merida, which they occupied on January 7th, almost without resistance, finding the bridge intact. From thence they sought for Mendizabal on the north side of the Guadiana, and discovered that he had withdrawn to Albuquerque, twenty miles north of Badajoz. Meanwhile Latour-Maubourg with four dragoon regiments took post at Albuera to watch the garrison of Badajoz, while Soult marched with Girard's infantry and one cavalry regiment to attack Olivenza, before whose walls he appeared on January 11th, 1811.

Olivenza ought never to have been defended. For since its cession by Portugal to Spain after Godoy's futile 'War of the Oranges' in 1801, it had been systematically neglected. The breach made by the Spaniards at its siege ten years before had never been properly repaired—only one-third of the masonry had been replaced, and the rest of the gap had been merely stopped with earth. Its one outlying work, a lunette 300 yards only from its southern point, was lying in ruins and unoccupied. The circuit of its walls was about a mile; but there were only eighteen guns[1] to guard them. The garrison down to the 5th of January had consisted of a single battalion left there by La Romana, when he marched for Portugal in October. But Mendizabal, apparently in inexcusable ignorance of the condition of the place, had ordered a whole brigade of his infantry to throw themselves into it when Soult began to press forward. He sacrificed, in fact, 2,400 out of the 6,000 bayonets of his division

[1] Soult reports eighteen guns surrendered: but Herck says in his dispatch that only eight were serviceable.

by bidding them shut themselves up in an utterly untenable fortress[1]. The governor, General Manuel Herck—an old Swiss officer—was ailing and quite incapable; a man of resources might have done something with the heavy garrison placed under his orders, even though the walls were weak and artillery almost non-existent; but Herck disgraced himself.

When Soult arrived in front of Olivenza on January 11th, his engineers informed him that the place, weak as it was, was too strong to take by escalade, but that a very few days of regular battering would suffice to ruin it. Unfortunately for him, there was as yet no heavy artillery at his disposition, but only the divisional batteries of Girard's two brigades; the siege-train was still stuck in the passes. However, the outlying lunette opposite the south front was at once seized, and turned into a battery for four field-guns, which opened their fire on the next day. The old Spanish breach of 1801, obviously ready to fall in on account of its rickety repairs, was visible in the north-west front, the bastion of San Pedro. Opposite this sites for two more batteries were planned, and a first parallel opened. The trench-work went on almost unhindered by the Spaniards, who showed but few guns and shot very badly, but under considerable difficulties from the rainy weather, which was perpetually flooding the lower parts of the lines. But in ten days approaches were pushed right up to the edge of the counter-scarp, and mines prepared to blow it in. The siege artillery began to arrive on the 19th, in detachments, and continued to drop in for several days. On the 21st the batteries, being completed, were armed with the first 12-pounders that came up. On the 22nd the fire began, and at once proved most effective: the bastion of San Pedro began to crumble in, and the old breach of 1801 revealed itself, by the falling away of the rammed earth which alone stopped it up. The arrangements for a storm had not yet been commenced when the garrison hoisted the white

[1] The original garrison was Voluntarios de Navarra, 1,150 bayonets properly belonging to O'Donnell's division, which was at Lisbon with La Romana. The reinforcements thrown in at the last moment were four battalions, 2,400 bayonets, from the regiments Merida, Truxillo, Barbastro, and Monforte—the two former part of the original army of Estremadura, the two latter part of Del Parque's old army from the north.

flag. Mortier refused all negotiations and demanded a surrender at discretion. This the old governor hastened to concede, coming out in person at one of the gates, and putting the place at the disposition of the French without further argument.[1] Soult and Mortier entered next day, and 4,161 Spanish troops marched out and laid down their arms before the 6,000 infantry of Girard, who had formed the sole besieging force. The total loss of the French during the siege was 15 killed and 40 wounded —that of the besieged about 200. The figures are a sufficient evidence of the disgraceful weakness of the defence.

When one reflects what was done to hold the unfortified town of Saragossa, and the mediaeval enceinte of Gerona, it is impossible not to reflect what a determined governor might have accomplished at Olivenza. The place was short of guns, no doubt—but the enemy was worse off till the last days of the siege, since he had nothing but twelve light field-pieces until the siege-train began to arrive. General Herck made no sorties to disturb the works—though he had a superabundant garrison; he made no serious attempt to retrench the breach, and he surrendered actually ere the first summons had been sent in before the storm. At the worst he might have tried to cut his way out between the French camps, which were scattered far from each other, owing to the extremely small numbers of the besieging army, who only counted three men to the defenders' two. Altogether it was a disgraceful business. The place, no doubt, ought never to have been held; but if held it might at least have been defended—which it practically was not.

Soult was placed in a new difficulty by the surrender of Olivenza. Though his siege-train had begun to come up, he had no news of Gazan, and his infantry was still no more than a single division. He had to spare two battalions to escort the 4,000 prisoners to Seville, and to put another in Olivenza as garrison[2]. This left him only eleven battalions—5,435 bayonets,

[1] Herck's miserable exculpatory dispatch may be found in Chaby, iv. pp. 200–1.

[2] The regiment sent back with the prisoners was the 63rd, the one borrowed from Victor: it had not been at the siege, but supporting Latour-Maubourg at Albuera. The garrison left in Olivenza was one battalion of the 64th.

to continue the campaign, though he had the enormous force of 4,000 cavalry at his disposition, and a siege-train that was growing every day, as more belated pieces came up from the rear. He might probably have waited for Gazan, for whom messages had been vainly sent, if he had not received, on the day that Olivenza fell, one more of Berthier's peremptory letters, dated 22 December, in which he was told (as usual) to send the 5th Corps to join Masséna on the Tagus without delay. This letter came at an even more inappropriate moment than usual, as Gazan, with half that corps, was lost to sight in the mountain of the Condado de Niebla, more than a hundred and twenty miles away. But it was clear that something immediate must be done, or the Emperor would be more discontented than before; accordingly Soult resolved to take the very hazardous step of laying siege to Badajoz at once with the small infantry force at his disposition. For this move would undoubtedly provoke alarm at Lisbon, and lead Wellington to send off La Romana's army to succour it, and perhaps some Anglo-Portuguese troops also, so that the mass opposed to Masséna would be more or less weakened.

Accordingly on the 26th of January Soult marched against Badajoz, which is only twelve miles north-west of Olivenza, with under 6,000 infantry, ten companies of artillery, and seven of sappers, to invest the southern side of Badajoz, while Latour-Maubourg, with six regiments of cavalry, crossed the Guadiana by a ford, and went to blockade the place on its northern front.

Badajoz, though owning some defects, was still a stronghold of the first class, in far better order than most of the Peninsular fortresses. It belonged to that order of places whose topography forces a besieger to divide his army by a dangerous obstacle, since it lies on a broad river, with the town on one side and a formidable outwork on the other. Indeed the most striking feature of Badajoz, whether the traveller approaches it from the east or the west, is the towering height of San Cristobal, crowned by its fort, lying above the transpontine suburb and dominating the whole city. Any enemy who begins operations against the place must take measures to blockade or to attack this high-lying fort, which completely covers the bridge and its *tête-du-pont*, and effectively protects ingress or egress to or from

the place. But San Cristobal is not easy to blockade, since it is the end-bluff of a very steep narrow range of hills, which run for many miles to the north, and divide the country-side beyond the Guadiana into two separate valleys, those of the Gebora and the Caya, which are completely invisible from each other.

The city of Badajoz is built on an inclined plane, sloping down from the Castle, which stands on a lofty hill with almost precipitous grass slopes, at the north-east end of the place, down to the river on the north and the plain on the south and west. The castle-hill and San Cristobal between them form a sort of gorge, through which the Guadiana, narrowed for a space, forces its way, to broaden out again at the immensely long bridge with its thirty-two arches and 640 yards of roadway. Below the castle the Rivillas, a stagnant brook with hardly any current, —the home of frogs and the hunting-ground of the city storks, —coasts around the walls, and finally dribbles into the river. The front of the place from the river to the castle was composed of eight regular bastions; along the river edge there lies nothing more than a single solid wall without relief or indentations: but this side of the place is wholly inaccessible owing to the water. There are two outlying works, which cover heights so close into the place that it is necessary to hold them, lest the enemy should establish himself too near the enceinte. These are the Picurina lunette beyond the Rivillas, and the much larger Pardaleras fort, a 'half-crown-work,' opposite the south point of the city, which covers a well-marked hill that commands that low-lying part of the place, and is a position impossible to concede to the besieger, since it is only 250 yards from the nearest bastion. It was ill-designed, having a very shallow ditch, and being incompletely closed at its gorge by a mere palisade.

The eight bastions which form the attackable part of the enceinte of Badajoz have (they remain to-day just as they were in 1811, for the place has never been modernized) a height of about thirty feet[1] from the bottom of the ditch to the rampart, while the curtains between them are somewhat lower, about twenty-two feet only. The ditch was broad, with a good

[1] Except the two nearest the river, San Vincente and San José, which are a little lower.

counterscarp in masonry seven feet high; beyond it each bastion was protected in front by a rather low and weak demi-lune.

The garrison, not more than enough for such an extensive place, consisted at the New Year of 4,100 men; but Mendizabal threw in two battalions more (1st and 2nd of the Second Regiment of Seville) before he retired to the borders of Portugal, so that the figure had risen to 5,000 before Soult appeared in front of the walls. The governor was a very distinguished soldier, General Rafael Menacho, who had served through the old French war of 1792–5, and had commanded a regiment at Baylen. He was in the full vigour of middle age (forty-four years old) and abounding in spirit, resolution, and initiative, as all his movements showed down to the unhappy day of his death.

Soult's engineers, after surveying the situation of Badajoz, reported that under ordinary circumstances the most profitable front to attack would certainly be the western—that between the Pardaleras fort and the river; but at the same time they decided that it had better be left alone. For the army was so weak that it could not properly invest the whole city, and if the north bank of the Guadiana were left practically unoccupied, as must necessarily be the case, the Spaniards would be able to seize the ground beyond the bridge-head, and establish batteries there, which would effectually enfilade the trenches which would have to be constructed for approaching the west side of the place. The castle and the north-east angle of the town were too high-lying to be chosen as the point of attack, and the Rivillas and its boggy banks were better avoided. They therefore advised that the south front should be chosen as the objective, and that the first operation taken in hand should be the capture of the Pardaleras fort, for that work appeared weak and ill-planned, while its site would make the most advantageous of starting-points for breaching the enceinte of the town itself. It was the most commanding ground close in to the walls which could be discovered. Soult and Mortier concurred, and placed the army in the best position for utilizing this method of attack. The camps of Girard's division were placed on and around two low hills, the Cerro de San Miguel on the right of the Rivillas, and the Cerro del Viento on its left. On

the former height, about 1,800 yards from the town, nothing was done save the construction of a rough entrenchment—to face the Picurina and restrict possible sallies—in which three small batteries were afterwards inserted. The Cerro del Viento, which is about 1,200 yards from the Pardaleras, was to be the real starting-point of the attack, and under its side the siege-park and engineers' camp were established. Two batteries in front of it were marked out and begun on the first night of 'open trenches' (January 28–9), but it was not till the third night (January 30–1) that the first parallel was commenced, on the undulating ground to the west of the Rivillas. When the work became visible next day, the governor directed a vigorous sortie against it, composed of 800 men. The trenches were occupied for a moment, but soon recovered by the French supports. A small body of Spanish cavalry which had taken part in the sally rode right round the rear of the camp, and sabred the *chef-de-bataillon* Cazin, the chief engineer, and a dozen of his sappers on the Cerro del Viento. But the total loss of the besiegers was only about seventy killed and wounded, while the men of the sortie suffered much more heavily, while they were being driven back across the open ground towards the city. Their commander, a Colonel Bassecourt of the 1st Regiment of Seville —the corps which furnished the sallying force—was killed. Next day the siege-works were so little injured that the artillery was able to put guns into the first batteries that had been marked out. On the first three days of February incessant and torrential rains stopped further work—the whole of the first parallel was inundated, and the flying bridge by which alone Soult could communicate with Latour-Maubourg on the other side of the Guadiana was washed away.

But despite of the rain February 3 was a day of joy for the French, for on its morning Gazan reported his arrival at Valverde, ten miles away, and at 3 o'clock his division of 6,000 men marched into camp and doubled the force of the besieging army. Their arrival was a piece of cruel ill-luck for the Spaniards, for on that same afternoon, at dusk, Menacho sent out a formidable sortie of 1,500 men—all that he could safely spare from the ramparts—who came out of the river-side gate (Puerto de las Palmas) and stormed the first parallel, driving

out the workers and the three companies of their covering party. The Spaniards had already filled up a considerable section of the trench, when they were charged by two battalions of Gazan's newly-arrived troops, and driven out again, before they had finished their task. The serious nature of the attack may be judged from the fact that the French lost 188 killed and wounded—including eight officers—in repelling it. If only one brigade of Girard had been in the Cerro del Viento camps, instead of Gazan's entire division, it is probable that the whole first parallel and the batteries behind it would have been destroyed. While the damage was being repaired, on February 4, Soult began to bombard the town from these batteries, but with no good effect. The result, indeed, was rather to the profit of the Spaniards, for a great portion of the civil population fled at the first sign of bombardment, and escaped by night down the Guadiana bank towards Elvas. The provisions left in their deserted houses added appreciably to Menacho's stores.

The work of extending the first parallel diagonally toward the Pardaleras was still going on, when, on February 5th, the whole situation before Badajoz was changed by the appearance in the neighbourhood of a Spanish army of succour. Even before Soult had started from Seville at the New Year, Wellington had been aware of the imminence of the invasion of Estremadura, and had been consulting with his colleague La Romana as to the measures that it would be necessary to take[1]. As early as the 2nd of January La Romana had sent orders to Mendizabal, to tell him that if the French should cross the Sierra Morena in force, he was to evacuate Southern Estremadura, break the bridges of Medellin and Merida, and endeavour to defend the line of the Guadiana[2]. By later instructions (January 8) Mendizabal was directed to retire into the Sierra de San Mamed if the enemy crossed the river above Badajoz,

[1] Wellington, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 98, dated January 1st, to Charles Stuart reports that from Cadiz advices of December 23rd he is aware that a concentration is taking place at Seville, though Mendizabal knows nothing of it.

[2] Wellington's covering letter to La Romana's dispatch is in *Wellington Dispatches*, vii. p. 99.

but to throw himself upon their rear, and to hang on to them, if they crossed below, and seemed to be making for Elvas and Portugal. On the 12th, Wellington, hearing that Soult seemed to be heading towards Olivenza rather than Merida, conceived doubts as to whether he might not be intending to abandon his communications with Seville, to leave the fortresses behind him, and to march to the Tagus to co-operate with Masséna upon the Alemtejo bank of that river. On the 14th arrived the more comfortable news that the French had sat down to beleaguer Olivenza, a sure sign that they did not propose to cut themselves loose from their base and to join Masséna as a flying column. As a matter of fact, as we have seen, Soult, having been deprived of Gazan's assistance, was too weak at this moment to dream of an incursion into Portugal, and had attacked Olivenza because he could find nothing else to do for the present.

Accordingly, since the enemy had apparently settled down to besiege the Estremaduran fortresses, Wellington and La Romana determined to reinforce Mendizabal up to a strength which would enable him to act as a serious check upon Soult, probably even to foil him completely. On January 14th La Romana ordered Carlos de España and his brigade of some 1,500 or 1,800 men, from opposite Abrantes, to join the small existing remnant of the Army of Estremadura [1]. On the 19th [2], the more important resolve was taken of sending the remainder of the Spanish troops from the Lisbon lines on the same errand—they amounted to about 6,000 men, the rest of La Carrera's division, and the whole of that of Charles O'Donnell. Starting on the 20th they reached Montemor o Novo on the 24th—where they heard of the disgraceful capitulation of Olivenza,—and Elvas on the 29th. To the same point came in Mendizabal, who, with the remains of his own infantry division—something over 3,000 men, and Butron's cavalry, had moved from his original post at Albuquerque to Portalegre on the Portuguese border, and had there been joined by Carlos de España's brigade. Madden's Portuguese cavalry had already moved back to Campo Mayor and

[1] Wellington, *Dispatches*, vii. 143.

[2] Ibid., vii. 165, where a letter to Henry Wellesley fixes the resolve to send off these troops to 'yesterday,' i.e. January 19th.

Elvas when Soult first undertook the siege of Olivenza. By the accumulation of all these forces an army of about 11,000 infantry and over 3,000 cavalry was put together[1].

La Romana himself had intended to take charge of the expedition, which under his prudent leadership would probably have achieved its desired end, and have held Soult completely in check. But he was prevented from starting with his troops on the 20th by an indisposition which was not judged to be serious—a 'spasm in the chest[2],' apparently a preliminary attack of *angina pectoris*. He appeared convalescent on the 22nd, but died suddenly of a recurrence of the complaint early on the afternoon of the 23rd, after he had already sent forward his secretary and staff to prepare quarters for him on the way towards the army. His death was a real disaster to the cause of the allies, for two main reasons. The first was that, unlike most of his contemporaries in the Spanish service, he was a very cautious general, who avoided risks and preferred to manœuvre rather than to fight, unless he had a good chance of success. His long marches and many retreats had won him the punning nickname of the 'Marqués de las Romerías'—the Marquis of Pilgrimages: but even a long 'pilgrimage' is better than a defeat, and he had never destroyed an army, like Cuesta, Blake, or Areizaga. The other reason which made him valuable to the allied cause was that, being a man of great tact and obliging manners, he had won Wellington's personal regard, and always lived on the best terms with him. Indeed, the Marquis was the only Spanish general, save Castaños, who never had any difficulties with his English colleague; and it may be added that

[1] Viz. La Carrera (including Carlos de España) about 2,500 infantry.
Charles O'Donnell's division . . . . 5,000 ,,
Remains of Mendizabal's division, which had thrown four battalions into Olivenza and two into Badajoz 3,500
Butron's cavalry, about . . . . . 2,500 cavalry.
Madden's Portuguese cavalry brigade . . 950 ,,
Artillery . . . . . 450 artillery.
Total 14,900 in all.

[2] Wellington calls the disease 'spasms of the chest'; the Spanish authorities term it an aneurism.

Wellington thought much more of his capacity than of that of Castaños, whom he regarded as well-meaning but weak. He wrote of him, in words that may be regarded as entirely genuine and heartfelt, and which were not intended for Spanish eyes, that he was the brightest ornament of the Spanish army, an upright patriot, a strenuous and zealous defender of the cause of European liberty, a loyal colleague, a useful councillor[1].

That the Marquis was not a man of brilliant genius, nor a general of the first rank, is sufficiently evident from the account of his campaigns, duly detailed in the first three volumes of this work. But he had a very high and meritorious record; of all the old nobles of Spain he was the one who served his country best in the day of her distress. His energy and determination were displayed in his romantic escape from Denmark in 1808[2]. Having once unsheathed his sword in the national cause, he never faltered or despaired even in the day of the worst disaster. If his life had been spared he would have fought on undismayed to the end of the war. Though he became involved in the unhappy disputes which preceded the fall of the Supreme Junta, in the winter of 1809–10[3], and did not disdain to accept a command from the illegal Seville government in the January of the latter year[4], he was neither a self-seeker nor a *frondeur*. If his words or acts sometimes appeared factious, they were inspired by a genuine discontent at the incapacity of the ruling powers, not by a desire for self-advancement; and there seems to be no evidence to connect him with the unwise and autocratic proceedings of his brother José Caro in Valencia. During the last year of his life he was discharging a very invidious task while he commanded in Estremadura under the control of the last regency, which treated him with neglect and regarded him with suspicion. His death is said to have been hastened by scurrilous accusations made against his loyalty in pamphlets and newspapers published at Cadiz[5], which drove

[1] See especially Wellington to Liverpool, January 26th, in *Dispatches*, vii. 196–7. The corresponding letter to Mendizabal is less important, because it is written to a Spanish correspondent.

[2] See vol. i. pp. 371–4. [3] See vol. iii. pp. 6–7. [4] Ibid., 40.

[5] See Wellington, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 115, for note as to libels published by 'a vagabond named Calvo.'

him to distraction, for he was a man of a sensitive disposition, keenly affected by any criticism. Albuquerque, it will be remembered, is said to have been helped towards his grave by similar means [1].

The death of La Romana, and the transfer at this same date of Charles O'Donnell to another sphere of operations, caused a general rearrangement of the commands in the Army of Estremadura. Mendizabal, as the sole Lieutenant-General in the province, succeeded to the place and responsibilities of the Marquis, but only as a provisional chief; the Regency, justly doubting his abilities, nominated Castaños as Captain-General. Unfortunately, as we shall see, the victor of Baylen reached Estremadura just in time to hear that his *locum tenens* had destroyed the army, and left hardly a wreck of it behind him. Meanwhile Mendizabal made over his own old division to a Major-General Garcia, while that of Charles O'Donnell fell to another officer new to us, Major-General José Virues. La Carrera became chief of the staff, or practically second in command, and his 'vanguard division' passed to his old brigadier Carlos de España.

As early as January 28th Soult had directed Latour-Maubourg with four regiments of light cavalry to make a reconnaissance in the direction of the Portuguese frontier, and by this movement had become aware that Mendizabal was at Portalegre, with his own infantry and Butron's cavalry. It was no surprise to the Marshal, therefore, to find, a week later, that a considerable force was pressing in his posts on the north of the Guadiana. The presence of Madden's Portuguese dragoons in the advanced guard showed that the enemy had been reinforced. Latour-Maubourg's cavalry-screen was driven in without much fighting, and the French general retired to Montijo, nine miles up the river (February 5th–6th). That night Mendizabal's army, nearly 15,000 strong, camped on the heights of San Cristobal, and communicated with Badajoz freely, the blockade being broken so far as the northern bank of the Guadiana was concerned.

Wellington and La Romana, when the return of the Spanish troops from Lisbon to Estremadura was ordered, had settled

[1] See vol. iii. p. 325.

upon a regular plan of campaign[1], which had been communicated to Mendizabal. It required some slight modification when the fall of Olivenza became known, and when Soult's intention to besiege Badajoz declared itself. But in its essentials it was well applicable to the situation of affairs upon February 6th. After a solemn warning to the Spanish generals that the Army of Estremadura is 'the last body of troops which their country possesses,' and must not be risked in dangerous operations, the memorandum suggests (1) that an entrenched camp capable of holding the entire army should be prepared on the heights which lie between Campo Mayor and Badajoz, and which end in the high bluff of San Cristobal above the latter town. (2) That if possible an attempt should be made to break the bridges of Medellin and Merida, so as to restrict the French to the southern bank of the Guadiana. (3) That the Regency should be asked to send back Ballasteros's division to join the Army of Estremadura, and (4) that the bridge of boats in store at Badajoz should, if possible, be floated down to Jerumenha, to give the Portuguese garrison of Elvas the power of crossing the Guadiana below Badajoz. The last suggestion was impracticable, because the French, when the dispatch reached Mendizabal, were so close to the river that the bridge could not have been transferred. The other three suggestions were all valuable, but none of them were carried out—least of all the most important of them, that which prescribed the entrenching of the San Cristobal heights, and their occupation by the whole of the Spanish army.

Mendizabal had a plan of his own—he resolved not to fortify himself on the heights beyond the river, as Wellington suggested, but to throw a great part of his infantry into Badajoz, and make with them a grand sortie against the French lines. The bulk of his cavalry remained below San Cristobal, and had a skirmish of evil omen with Latour-Maubourg, who drove them in with ease, and pursued them beyond the Gebora to the foot of the heights. But Madden's Portuguese horse filed into town across the bridge, to join in the sally of the infantry.

[1] This is 'Memorandum to the Marquis of La Romana,' to be found in Wellington, *Dispatches*, vii. 163, with date January 20, three days before that of the death of the Marquis.

At three o'clock on the afternoon of the 7th of February the sortie was made. While Madden's dragoons and a small infantry support threatened the left of the French lines, without closing, a large force composed of all Carlos de España's 'vanguard division,' with picked battalions from the others, delivered a vigorous —indeed a desperate—assault upon Soult's right, the entrenchments on the hill of San Miguel. There were apparently four columns, each of two battalions, and making 5,000 men: they came out from the Trinidad gate, drew up under the wing of the Picurina lunette, and then marched straight at the French camp. They pierced the line of entrenchments in their first rush, swept away the guard of the trenches, carried the three batteries which were inserted in them, and then became engaged in a fierce fight with Phillipon's brigade of Girard's division, the troops encamped behind this part of the lines. Mortier, who was on the other flank, detecting that the movements in front of him were only a demonstration, promptly sent several battalions eastward to succour the threatened point. These fell upon the Spaniards' flank, and threatened to cut them off from their retreat into the fortress, whereupon Carlos de España, who was slightly wounded, ordered a retreat, finding that forces equal to his own had now been concentrated against him [1]. His troops suffered severely in fighting their way back into Badajoz—their loss was about 650 men; that of the French, whose front line had been very severely handled, came to about 400. But the besieged could spare the larger number better than the besiegers the smaller, since they had the whole army of succour to draw upon, while Soult had no reserves nearer than Seville. It is hard to see why Mendizabal, if he was resolved upon a sortie, did not double the force engaged in it, as he might easily have done without depleting any part of

[1] The French put into action six battalions of the 34th and 40th of Phillipon's brigade [two in trench-guards, four in reserves], and one each of the 28th Léger, 64th, 88th, and 100th. The total force of these was, according to Belmas's figures, well over 5,000. Carlos de España had apparently six battalions of his own, and two or three more from the other divisions, very much the same force in mere numbers. But quality had also to be taken into consideration. La Mare gives the French loss as 6 officers and 48 men killed, 25 officers and 337 men wounded.

the enceinte. For, counting the garrison, he had 15,000 infantry—a larger number than the French could dispose of. To send out 5,000 only seems to have been a half-measure, which ensured ultimate failure when the besiegers should have drawn together[1]. The fighting of Carlos de España's men was most creditable, but there were not enough of them.

On the next day but one Mendizabal withdrew from Badajoz the divisions of Carlos de España and Virues, and part of that of Garcia[2], leaving the original garrison strengthened by the remainder of the last-named unit up to a force of 7,000 men. The field army retired across the river, and encamped on the strong position of the heights of San Cristobal, its right wing resting on the fort, while the remainder of its camps lay along the reverse slope of the range for a distance of a mile and a half. There were some 9,000 infantry on the position, and the 3,000 horse of Butron and Madden were encamped behind it in the plain of the Caya. By some inconceivable folly Mendizabal made no attempt to use this large force of cavalry, which he should have sent forward to seize and hold the valley of the Gebora, in front of his position. All beyond that stream, which flows at the very foot of the San Cristobal heights, was abandoned to Latour-Maubourg. It seems certain that the French cavalry general could have been driven to a respectful distance if a force of all arms had been sent against him, for he had on the north of the Guadiana only five regiments of horse and not a single battalion of infantry. But the Spaniard allowed himself to be cooped up on the hill, and kept no guard of cavalry far out in the plain to shield his front and report the motions of the enemy. What was worse, he made no attempt to entrench the long hillside, though this was a point on which Wellington and La Romana had given very clear and definite instructions. The position was strong, but as no care was taken to keep the enemy at a distance, it was always possible that he might make a sudden dash at it, and the Spanish army—scattered in its camps—would require time to take up its ground and form its fighting-line.

[1] This remark, a very just one, is made by Arteche in his great History, ix. p. 193.

[2] Valladolid, Osuna, Zafra, and La Serena now became part of the garrison, with a strength of about 2,000 bayonets.

For some days after the sortie, however, Soult paid little attention to Mendizabal, and concentrated all his efforts against the fortress. Having completed the first parallel, and established several new batteries in it, he proceeded with his operations against the Pardaleras fort. His plan was very daring—not to say hazardous—for on the afternoon of the 11th of February, when the work was much battered but still quite defensible, he determined to try to capture it by escalade. At dusk two columns, making about 500 men, issued from the trenches and dashed at the Pardaleras: the left-hand column coasting round its flank made for the gorge, which was only defended by a row of palisades. These were so weak that they were broken down or hewn to pieces by the assailants without much difficulty. At the same time the right column, which had entered the ditch, found an open postern into which it made its way. Attacked on two sides, the garrison evacuated the work, and fled into the city, leaving 60 men killed or prisoners behind them. The French, who had lost only 4 killed and 32 wounded in this reckless venture, established themselves in the Pardaleras. But the governor turned against the fort all the guns of the next two bastions, and the captors had to burrow and lie low, till on the night of the 12th–13th a trench was run out from the first parallel, which gave safe ingress and egress. During the intervening day the besiegers lost more men in holding the work than they had in storming it[1], and the Pardaleras, close though it was to the walls, proved to be ground from which it was most difficult to push forward while the artillery fire of the town was unsubdued. To transform the open gorge in its rear into a base for new approaches was a slow and expensive business, and the siege made a much less rapid progress than had been hoped.

Meanwhile Soult resolved to make a blow at Mendizabal and his field army, which was visible day after day encamped on the San Cristobal heights, in a position imposing but unfortified and ill-watched. The Marshal had intended to cross the Guadiana and deliver his attack even before the Pardaleras was taken, but much rain was falling, and the river had overflowed its banks, so that access to the point where the French flying-bridge had been

[1] 3 officers and 48 men killed and wounded according to La Mare, *Siége de Badajoz*, p. 58.

established, a mile above Badajoz, was difficult. Moreover the Gebora was also in flood, and reported to be unfordable, though usually a slender stream. The only thing which the Marshal was able to do between the 11th and the 18th of February was to shell the nearer end of the heights of San Cristobal from the batteries in his right attack, with the object of inducing the Spanish battalions there encamped to move further from the protection of the fort, which effectually covered their right flank. On February 13th this plan was seen to have been effective: the Spaniards had withdrawn from the neighbourhood, and had left half a mile unoccupied between San Cristobal and their new camp.

On the afternoon of the 18th it was reported to Soult that both the rivers had fallen, and that the Gebora had again become fordable. He made no delay, and at dusk his striking-force began to cross the Guadiana—the operation was slow, since only two flying-bridges and a few river-boats were available. But at dawn nine battalions[1], three squadrons, and two batteries were on the north bank, while Latour-Maubourg had come up from his usual post at Montijo with six cavalry regiments more. The whole force assembled in the angle between the Guadiana and the Gebora amounted to no more than 4,500 infantry[2] and 2,500 horse, with twelve guns, a total so much below Mendizabal's 9,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry that the adventure seemed most hazardous. But fortune often favours the audacious, and on this day Soult chanced on the unexpected luck of a very foggy morning. He was practically able to surprise the enemy, for the first warning that a battle was at hand only came to Mendizabal when, shortly after dawn, his picket at the broken bridge of the Gebora—a short mile or so in front of the heights—was driven in by masses of French infantry. At the same moment a tumult broke out on his left rear: the 2nd Hussars, sent on by Latour-Maubourg to discover and turn the Spanish northern flank, had been able to mount the heights unseen and unopposed, by making a long détour, and rode unexpectedly into the camp

[1] Three battalions each of the 34th, 88th, and 100th Line.

[2] Thirteen squadrons of the 4th, 14th, and 26th Dragoons, the 2nd and 10th Hussars, the 21st and 27th Chasseurs, and the Spanish light cavalry regiment of Juramentados.

of one of Carlos de España's regiments. Mendizabal's troops flew to arms, and began hastily to form their line upon the heights, but they had no time to get into good order, for the enemy was upon them within a few minutes.

Mortier, to whom Soult had committed the conduct of the battle, showed great tactical skill. On reaching the line of the Gebora, infantry and cavalry poured across it without a moment's delay; all the three fords of which the French knew proved to be practicable, though on the southernmost one, near the bridge, the infantry had to cross with the chilly water up to their waists. The order of battle was very simple: the right wing, composed of the whole of the cavalry, was to pass by the most northern ford and ascend the heights beyond the Spanish left. Arrived at the crest, one brigade was to push along it, and fall on the flank of the hostile line, while the other descended into the valley of the Caya, and charged into the Spanish camps, so placing itself directly in Mendizabal's rear. Of the infantry three battalions (the 100th regiment) were to ascend the hillside in the gap between the fort of San Cristobal and the nearest Spanish camp, a gap which had been caused (as it will be remembered) by the withdrawal of the Spaniards from the southernmost heights under the stress of bombardment six days before. This column was to risk the fire of the fort, which it had to disregard, and fall on the hostile flank. Meanwhile the centre—very weak and composed only of six battalions of infantry (34th and 88th regiments)—was to attack the Spanish front, when the two turning movements were well developed.

The San Cristobal heights are a most formidable position, two miles of smooth steep slopes with an altitude of 250–300 feet, overlooking the whole plain of the Gebora and with hardly any 'dead ground' in their sides. They form an excellent *glacis* for an army in position ready to defend itself by its fire, for the assailant must come up the hill at a slow pace and utterly exposed. Cavalry could only climb at a walk, and with difficulty; but Mortier had sent all his horse far to the north, where they ascended, and partly crossed, the range at its lowest point, beyond the extreme flank of the enemy. Just at this moment the fog rose, and everything became visible. On gaining the heights unopposed, Briche's light cavalry formed up across

them, and commenced to move along the summit towards the Spanish left wing, while Latour-Maubourg, with three dragoon regiments, descended the reverse slope and moved towards the hostile camp, in front of which Butron's Spanish horse and Madden's Portuguese could be seen hastily arraying their squadrons.

It may be said that the battle of the Gebora was lost almost before a shot had been fired, for on seeing themselves threatened in flank and about to be charged by Latour-Maubourg, the Spanish and Portuguese horse broke in the most disgraceful style, disregarding the orders of their commanders, and went off in a disorderly mass across the plain of the Caya, towards Elvas and Campo Mayor. They outnumbered the enemy, and could have saved the day if they had fought even a bad and unsuccessful action, so as to detain the French dragoons for a single hour. But the cavalry of the Army of Estremadura had a bad reputation—they were the old squadrons of Medellin and Arzobispo, of which Wellington preserved such an evil memory, and Madden's Portuguese this day behaved no better [1]. They escaped almost without loss, for Latour-Maubourg let them fly, and turned at once against the flank and rear of Mendizabal's infantry.

The combat on the southern part of the heights had not yet assumed a desperate aspect. Though the column which was formed by the 100th regiment had got up the hillside under the fort of San Cristobal, and had penetrated into the gap between that work and its extreme left, the Spanish infantry was still holding its own. The fog having cleared, they were able to estimate the smallness of the number of the hostile infantry, and stood to fight without showing any signs of failing. But the fusilade was only just beginning all along the hillside when the victorious French cavalry came into action. Briche's light horse came galloping along the crest of the heights, while Latour-Maubourg's dragoons were visible in the plain behind, well to the rear of the Spanish line. Mendizabal, horrified at the sight, ordered his men to form squares, not as usual by battalions, but vast divisional squares, each formed of many regiments, and with artillery in their angles. If the French cavalry alone had been present, it is possible that in this forma-

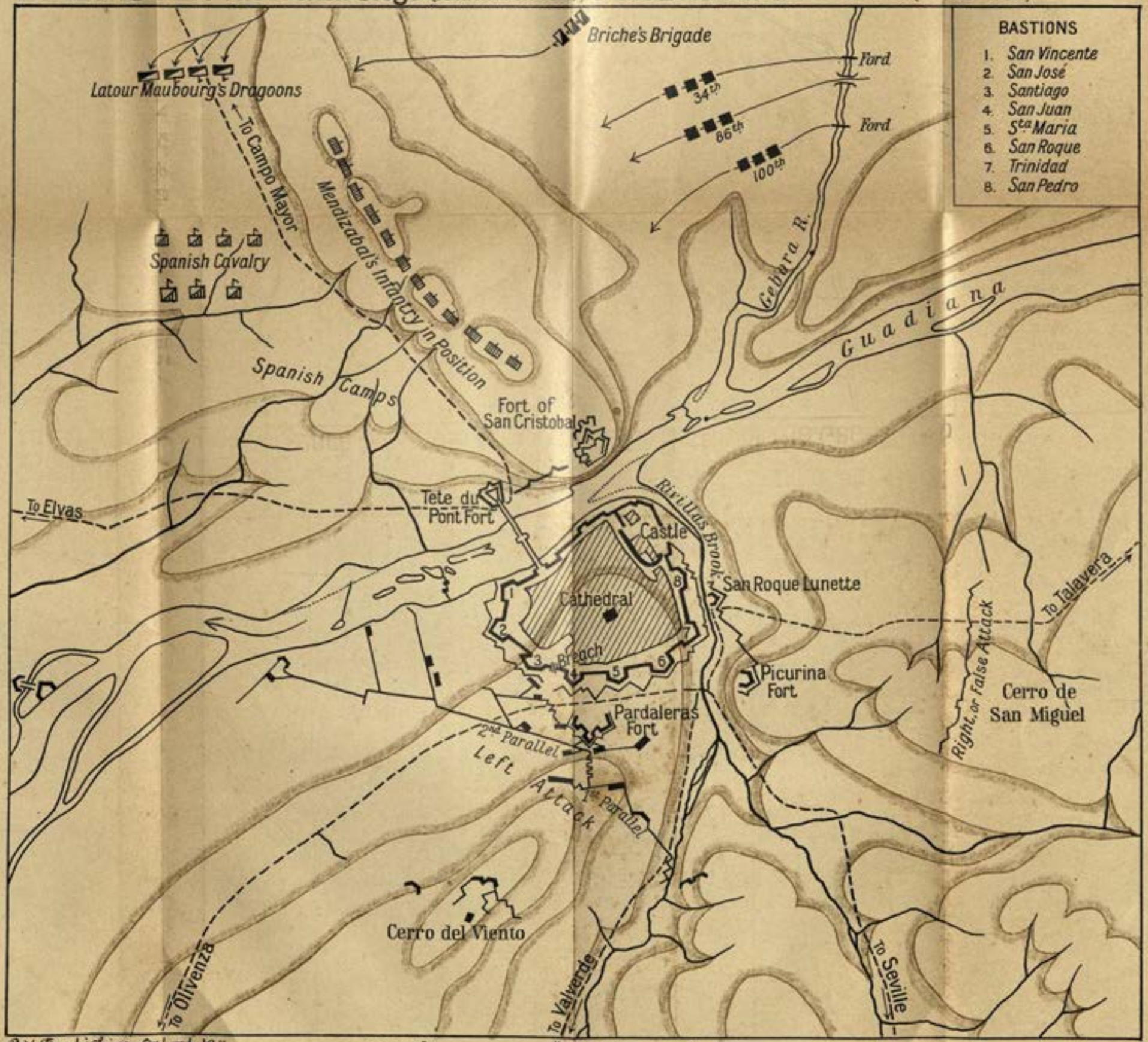
[1] See his pathetic letter in Wellington, *Supplementary Disp.*, vii. p. 67.

tion the Spaniards might have saved themselves. But Mortier's infantry was also up, and well engaged in bickering with Mendizabal's men. The squares, when formed with some difficulty, found themselves exposed to a heavy fire of musketry from the front at the same moment that the cavalry blow was delivered on their flank. Briche's hussars penetrated without much difficulty through battalions already shaken by the volleys of the French infantry. First the northern and soon afterwards the southern square was ridden through from the flank and broken. The disaster that followed was complete: some of the Spanish regiments dispersed, many laid down their arms in despair, a limited number clubbed together in heavy masses and fought their way out of the press towards the plain of the Caya and the frontier of Portugal. General Virues and three brigadiers were taken prisoners, with at least half of the army. Mendizabal and two other generals, La Carrera and Carlos de España, got away, under cover of the battalions which forced their passage through toward the west. In all about 2,500 infantry escaped into Badajoz[1], and a somewhat smaller number towards Portugal[2]. The rest were destroyed—only 800 or 900 had been killed or wounded, but full 4,000 were taken prisoners, along with seventeen guns—the entire artillery of the army—and six standards. The French loss, though under-estimated by Soult in his dispatch at the ridiculous figure of 30 killed and 140 wounded, was in truth very small—not exceeding 403 in all. It fell almost entirely on the cavalry—who had done practically the whole of the work. The regimental returns show that only four officers in the infantry were killed or wounded, to thirteen in the mounted arm. In proportion this battle was more disastrous to the vanquished and less costly to the victors than even Medellin or

[1] The statement that only a few men escaped into Badajoz is disproved by the figures of the surrender-rolls of March 11th, which show 1,108 men of La Carrera's division, 554 of Virues's division, and 995 of battalions of Garcia's division which had not been told off to the regular garrison, as laying down their arms.

[2] There escaped into Portugal, beside the cavalry, the greater part of the regiments La Union from Garcia's division, Rey and Princesa from that of Virues, Vittoria from that of La Carrera, and fragments of Zamora, and 1st of Barcelona. The whole, reorganized into new battalions, made a weak brigade of 1,800 men under Carlos de España in April.

BADAJOZ. The French Siege (Jan.-March 1811), & the Battle of the Gebora (Feb. 19th 1811).



Ocaña. It is difficult to write with patience of the culpable negligence of Mendizabal, in allowing himself to be surprised in such a position, when he was amply provided with cavalry, or of the conduct of the Spanish and Portuguese horse in abandoning their infantry without striking a single blow, when even a show of resistance might at least have given their comrades time to save themselves. For the battalions on the heights could have escaped into Badajoz, or even have retreated along the Guadiana without desperate loss, if they had been granted an hour's respite: while if the French cavalry could have been detained till the infantry battle on the heights was decided, it is quite clear that Mendizabal in his splendid fighting position, and with double numbers, could have held his own and driven off the attack of the nine battalions of Mortier.

The Army of Estremadura having been practically destroyed, —the demoralized remnant of 4,000 horse and foot which escaped into Portugal counted for nothing,—Soult could at last besiege Badajoz from both sides of the river, and reckon on being undisturbed in his operations. He left three battalions, a battery, and five regiments of Montbrun's cavalry on the north bank, to invest the fort of San Cristobal, and returned, with the rest of the force that had won the battle, to his lines. There was still much to be done, for the governor Menacho was resolute, and the garrison had been raised to over 8,000 men by the influx of Mendizabal's fugitives. The siege was destined to last three weeks longer, and might have been prolonged to a far greater duration if Menacho had not been killed on March 4; as long as he lived the defence was vigorous and honourable.

Though Soult could concentrate all his attention on the approaches towards the curtain between the bastions of Santiago and San Juan, they did not progress very rapidly. Menacho brought up all the artillery that could be readily moved on the threatened front, and continued to pound the ruins of the Pardaleras and the trenches leading up to it. It was only on the night of the 24th February that a battery was at last completed under the right flank of the fort, and another under its left, to keep down the fire of the defenders. Nor was it till the 28th of the same month and the 1st of March that the zig-zags began to creep forward from the second parallel towards the

body of the place. On the 2nd of March the approaches reached the demi-lune outside the bastion of San Juan, and the French could look down into the ditch, but they found the counterscarp in good order, and the palisades intact. On the 3rd they commenced mining, with the object of blowing in the counterscarp and filling the ditch. But their work was stopped by a vigorous sortie, the last which Menacho sent out. A small column of Spaniards passed out of the left bastion, seized and demolished the advanced trenches, and spiked the twelve guns which armed the two nearest batteries. The progress of the besiegers was checked for a day—but at a disastrous cost, for the governor himself, while watching the effect of the sortie from the ramparts, was killed by a chance shot. His place was taken by the senior brigadier in the place, José Imaz, a man of desponding heart and utterly lacking in energy. It was a thousand pities that, when the rout of the Gebora took place, neither La Carrera nor Carlos de España had been driven back into Badajoz, for both these officers were men of desperate resolution, who would have played out a losing game to the last moment with stubborn courage. The French narratives note that from the moment of Menacho's death the defence slackened; it became partly passive, and was no longer conducted with common skill. No more sorties were made, and there seemed to be a lack of ingenuity in the measures taken to resist the completion of the approaches[1]. All that was done was to keep up a hot fire on the head of the French sap, and to replace one disabled gun by another upon the walls.

On the 4th of March the besiegers had lodged themselves solidly in the demi-lune of the bastion of San Juan, and had commenced on the very edge of the ditch a battery for six heavy guns (24-pounders), which were to work upon the curtain between San Juan and Santiago, the place selected for the breaching.

[1] 'Depuis la mort du Général Menacho l'ennemi avait éprouvé un certain découragement, dont l'effet se faisait connaître par l'absence de cette force morale qui fait agir les hommes et qui donne le mouvement et la vigueur. Il n'osa plus nous attaquer dans nos batteries, dans nos tranchées, afin de détruire en quelques moments l'œuvre d'un jour. Il ne profita pas des moyens de chicane et des subtilités que la nécessité et l'industrie font inventer.' La Mare, p. 98.

On the 5th the embrasures were completed, on the 7th the guns were got into position, on the 8th the counterscarp was blown in by a mine, and the battery began to play upon the walls at a distance of only sixty yards. Though the besieged kept up a terrible fire upon it, and killed many gunners, its effect was all that the French had desired. The ramparts began to crumble, and on the morning of the 10th there was a breach seventy feet wide in the curtain, near the bastion of Santiago, while the ditch was half filled with débris. The engineers pronounced that an assault was practicable, though another day's fire would be desirable to finish the business. The Spanish guns on the front attacked were all silenced, but from the flanking bastions a fire was still kept up, which would obviously be very murderous to the storming columns. It was clear that it would be better to subdue it, and to batter the breach into an easier slope, before the assault should be delivered.

Soult, however, was anxious to press matters, for he had received on the 8th two pieces of news which completely changed the strategical situation. The first was that Masséna had given orders for the evacuation of Santarem and his other positions on the Tagus five days before, and had already commenced his retreat towards the north. There was no longer any chance of joining the Army of Portugal and attacking Wellington. Indeed, it was probable that the English general would find himself free to make a large detachment against the besiegers of Badajoz, and that, if the town should not fall within the next ten days, Beresford's 15,000 men from the south bank of the Tagus would appear at Elvas or Campo Mayor, ready to attack the siege-lines in the rear. And Soult from his experiences of 1809 was quite aware that to meet an Anglo-Portuguese army would not be a business like that of the Gebora.

But this was not all. News of the most disquieting kind had just arrived from Andalusia. Victor reported from in front of Cadiz that a large expeditionary force, comprising an English division, had landed at Algesiras and Tarifa on February 25th–26th, had moved into the inland, and was evidently about to attack his siege-lines from the rear. He expressed grave doubts as to the situation. Daricau, the Governor of Seville, had even a worse report to make: the roving division of Ballasteros, which

had been driven into Portugal by Gazan on January 25th, had recrossed the Spanish frontier the moment that its pursuers had retired, had invaded the Condado de Niebla, and had inflicted a severe defeat on Remond, whose small corps had been left to cover that region, on the Rio Tinto (March 2nd). Daricau reported that the Spaniards were marching on Seville, and that, after leaving a skeleton garrison of convalescents and *Juramentados* in the city, he was moving out with a field force of no more than 1,600 bayonets to rally Remond's men, and fight at San Lucar la Mayor for the protection of the capital of Andalusia. Ballasteros was believed to have a considerable force, and the result was doubtful.

On the morning of the 10th of March, therefore, Soult was in no small distress concerning the fate of Daricau and Victor, whose last dispatches were now six or seven days old, and who might have suffered disasters, for all that he knew, since those dispatches were written. If modern methods of communication had existed in 1811, he would have known already that Victor had suffered a complete and bloody defeat at Barrosa on March 5th. He was therefore prepared to take great risks at Badajoz, in order to have his army free at any cost for the succour of Andalusia. Mortier was ordered to get all ready for a storm during the course of the afternoon, but meanwhile, when a few hours' battering after dawn had somewhat improved the slope of the breach, a *parlementaire* was sent into Badajoz at 9 a.m. to summon Imaz to capitulate. The letter which he bore was couched in such elaborate terms of politeness, complimenting the Spaniards on their long and gallant resistance, and intimating that the most honourable terms would be granted, that the governor should have suspected that Soult was not sure of his ground. But to a man cowed in spirit and weighed down by a responsibility too great for him, such hints were useless. Imaz summoned a council of war, the regular refuge of weak commanders, and called into it a veritable crowd of councillors, not only the three generals and four brigadiers present in the city, the chief engineer, and two artillery officers, but nearly a score of lieutenant-colonels and majors commanding all the battalions represented in the garrison. Unfortunately the engineer colonel, Julian Alvo, who led off the discussion, was the most downhearted

man of all: he reported that the breach was from thirty to thirty-two ells (*varas*) broad, and accessible, as it had an angle of forty-five to fifty degrees; that there had been great difficulty in throwing up retrenchments and inner defences behind it, because at this point the ground-level of the streets of the town was much lower than that of the ramparts. He pointed out that to garrison the whole enceinte with a minimum force would absorb 5,000 men, which would leave only 2,000 to defend the breach. 'As to the number and *morale* of the troops, the regimental officers would be able to speak with better knowledge than himself.' But he held that if the first assault were repulsed, the fall of the town would only be delayed two or three days. If there were evidence that the place might be relieved from outside within that time, it was proper to resist to the last. If not, he thought that the heroic garrison and the city ought not to be sacrificed. For they had fully done their duty, and Badajoz as a fortress was full of defects [1].

Twelve colonels and majors gave their opinions in almost the same terms as the engineer, many repeating his actual phrases, some adding that the rank and file were demoralized [2], others that they were few in number [they actually were only 1,800 less than the infantry of the besieging force]. On the other hand, the commanding artillery officer, Joaquin Caamano, set forth a very different case. 'The enemy has not yet subdued the fire of the place; the bastions flanking the breach are intact, and have their guns in order; the breach itself has been mined, and a parapet behind it has been thrown up during the last night; in spite of the arguments of the commander of the engineers the assault ought to be resisted, or as an alternative the garrison ought to try to cut its way out by the north bank, towards Elvas or Campo Mayor.' Caamano was supported by the vote of another artilleryman, the Portuguese João de Mello, commanding a company which Beresford had sent into the city

[1] For all these interesting details see the verbatim report of the Council of War in the Appendix to Arteche, vii. pp. 544–7.

[2] 'Hallarse la guarnicion en una total decadencia' (opinion of Col. Ponce de Leon of 1st Barcelona). The garrison 'no es de la primera classe en general' (opinion of Col. Zamora of the Zafra regiment). 'El soldado, cansado ya de la mucha fatiga, trataría de salvarse' (opinion of Col. Hernandez of the Majorca regiment).

in the preceding year[1], and two major-generals, Garcia and Mancio.

Then came the oddest part of the proceedings. The Governor gave as his opinion that 'though an inner line of defence has not been contrived, and though very few guns still remain serviceable in the bastions of Santiago, San José, and San Juan, and though we have no succour for sustaining the assault, I think we should defend the place with valour and constancy to our last breath.' After which he at once commenced negotiations with the French *parlementaire*, in direct contradiction to his own vote! Apparently he thought that thirteen votes for surrender against four for resistance among his councillors covered his ignominy. The worst part of his conduct was that he was aware that an army of succour was on the march to help him. For Badajoz had semaphore communication with Elvas, and on the preceding day the Portuguese General Leite had telegraphed to him, by Wellington's orders, that Beresford had been detached with two divisions to hasten to his aid on March 8th[2]. As a matter of fact, Beresford's movement into

[1] See Soriano da Luz, iii. 337-8.

[2] D'Urban (Beresford's chief of the staff) has in his diary under March 8th: 'At 3 o'clock the Marshal crossed the river (Tagus) at Torres Novas and had an interview with Lord Wellington. The immediate relief of Badajoz, whose danger becomes imminent, has been judged desirable, this to be done with the 2nd and 4th Divisions. The Marshal returned at 8. Orders sent to Punhete to throw the bridge of boats over the Tagus at Tancos for the re-passage of General Stewart (2nd Division) and the passage of General Cole (4th Division). The troops still on the south bank of the Tagus are thrown into march upon Portalegre [near Elvas]. Orders to Mr. Ogilvie, the commissary, to take measures for supplies southward. General Menacho's last sally, in which he is unfortunately killed, has probably saved the place by gaining of time, even if but for a few additional days.' On the evening of the 9th March the movement was stopped, on a false rumour that Masséna was offering battle near Thomar, but news of it had been sent to General Leite at Elvas, who passed it by semaphore from Fort La Lippe to San Cristobal, which safely received it. It was not till the 12th that the 2nd Division was ordered to Crato in the Alemtejo, and Beresford reached Portalegre only on the 20th, nine days after Badajoz fell. Wellington says (*Dispatches*, vii. 360-1) 'the Governor surrendered on the day after he received my assurances that he should be relieved, and my entreaty to hold out till the last moment.' Cf. ibid., 367.

Estremadura was retarded, and his corps did not move off for some days later, but Imaz did not know this, and he was certainly guilty of concealing from his officers that prompt succour had been promised, and was actually upon its way. The whole responsibility for the surrender falls on him, because he allowed Alvo, and the other voters for capitulation, to produce uncontradicted the statement that no relief was probable, while he knew himself that it had been promised. It is impossible to deny that this was pusillanimity reaching into and over the border of treason.

After making some foolish hagglings for eighteenth-century ceremonial of honour—the garrison was to march out by the breach, drums beating, with two cannons at its head, with lighted matches, &c.—Imaz surrendered at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and the lofty San Cristobal and the bridge-head fort were occupied by the French before dusk. Next day the troops came forth, not by the breach, because it was found impossible to scramble down it, but by the Trinidad gate, and laid down their arms[1]. They numbered 7,880 men, and there were 1,100 sick and wounded in the hospitals; the total loss in the town during the siege had been 1,851 casualties, almost the same as that of the French, which came to just under 2,000. But the 800 killed and wounded, and 4,000 prisoners of the Gebora must, of course, be added to the balance.

Badajoz was found by the victors to contain rations for 8,000 men sufficient to last for over a month, more than 150 serviceable cannon, 80,000 lb. of powder, 300,000 infantry cartridges, and two bridge equipages. There is not the slightest doubt that if Menacho had lived the place would have held out till it was relieved by Beresford. For the latter, who was finally ordered to move to its relief on March 12th, would have reached its neighbourhood on the 18th, if he had not been checked on the first day of his start by the news that the city had fallen[2].

[1] Arteche (ix. 229) says that they used the breach, but La Mare, an eye-witness, says that the Trinidad gate was the point of exit. Soriano da Luz, using some Portuguese source unknown to me, says that only some Spanish sappers came down the breach slope, and they with difficulty.

[2] This was known to Wellington and Beresford on the 14th, or the night of the 13th, as is shown by Wellington, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 359.

After the need for hurry had been removed by this disheartening intelligence, he moved slowly, but was in front of Campo Mayor, less than ten miles from Badajoz, on the 24th.

There is hardly ever an excuse for a governor who surrenders without having withstood at least one assault, and Napoleon laid down the general rule that any officer so doing should be sent before a court martial. Imaz with his large garrison, his immense artillery resources, and his certainty of being relieved in ten days was least of all men in a condition to plead justification. It is only necessary to compare him with Alvarez at Gerona, who with a smaller garrison and a far weaker fortress held out for three months, after not one but three large breaches had been made in his weak mediaeval enceinte. The Regency very properly ordered Imaz to be put on his trial, but the proceedings, which only commenced when the French liberated him, dragged on interminably, and had not come to an end when the war ceased in 1814. If ever there was a case where an example in the style of Admiral Byng, *pour encourager les autres*, could have been rightfully made, this was one.

Soult, relieved from desperate anxiety by Imaz's surrender, had no other thought than to return as quickly as possible to Andalusia. Leaving Mortier at Badajoz with sixteen battalions and five regiments of cavalry, about 11,000 men, he started back for Seville on the third day after the capitulation, taking with him two regiments of dragoons and the bulk of Gazan's division [1]. As he marched he was in fear that any hour might bring the news that Daricau had lost Seville, or that Victor had been forced to abandon the siege of Cadiz, for the report of the bloody defeat of Barrosa (March 5) had reached him on the 12th of March, and heightened his anxiety. But he reached Seville on March 20th, to find that the situation might yet be saved, and that Andalusia was still his own.

His achievements during the two months of his Estremaduran campaign had indeed been splendid. With an army not exceeding 20,000 men, and operating in the worst of weather, he had taken two fortresses, won a battle in the open field, and cap-

[1] Less two battalions left in Badajoz as garrison, and the 100th of the Line also left with Mortier.

tured 16,000 prisoners. The Spanish Army of Estremadura, which had seemed so powerful at the commencement of his campaign, was almost exterminated, and the frontier of Portugal was laid open. Soult had redeemed his promise to make a powerful diversion in favour of Masséna, and it is hard to see how he could have done more. For he could not have moved to the Tagus before Badajoz fell, and (thanks to the courage of Menacho) that city had held out till eight days after the date on which Masséna ordered the Army of Portugal to commence its retreat to the north. Wellington's plan of starvation had, after all, achieved its effect, and Masséna had been driven out of his position before Soult was in a position to come to his aid. Even if Masséna had stayed a little longer at Santarem, it seems hard to believe that Soult could have joined him, considering that Elvas, a place stronger than Badajoz, was in his front, and that the news from Andalusia spelt utter ruin unless he should return to save it. He must have done so, even if on March 11 the Army of Portugal had still been in its old position.

SECTION XXIII: CHAPTER III

MASSÉNA'S LAST WEEKS AT SANTAREM
JANUARY–MARCH 1811

After the arrival of Drouet and his division of the 9th Corps at Leiria in the early days of the New Year, there was no serious movement of any part of the French or the British armies for some weeks. The weather was bad, and the troops on both sides remained in their cantonments, save such of the French as were detailed for the perpetual marauding parties up the line of the Zezere or in the southern slopes of the Serra da Estrella by which alone the army was kept alive. The ranks of Masséna's battalions continued to grow thinner, but not at such a rate as in November and December—for the weakly men had already been weeded out by the dreadful mortality of the preceding period. Provisions had daily to be sought further and further afield, but they were not wholly exhausted. The Marshal waited anxiously for further news from Paris, and for tidings that the Army of Andalusia was coming to his aid. But after the arrival of Drouet's column no further information got through for five weeks, for Wilson and Trant were blocking the northern roads with their militia as effectually as in the time before the 9th Corps started from Almeida.

Wellington, for his part, was waiting for his great scheme of starvation to work out to its logical end. He had, as has already been observed, somewhat underrated the time for which the French would be able to live on the resources of the country that he dominated. More than once in December and January he thought that he had detected the signs of a coming retreat, and had been disappointed[1]. The enemy still remained in his old

[1] I find in D'Urban's diary under January 13: 'Concurring testimony of deserters, &c., announces some general movement on the part of the enemy. Lord W. inclines to imagine that this will be a retreat, and that the retreat will be by the Mondego; to this he is inclined by Claparéde being ordered to take post at Guarda. But I have my doubts if anything like retreat has yet entered the head of Masséna.' This is borne out by Wellington to Beresford of same day. (*Dispatches*, vii. 138.)

cantonments, and nothing more than petty movements of small units had taken place. This anxious waiting was, as might have been expected, trying to Wellington's temper. He was not shaken in his belief that he had made the right decision, but it was exasperating to see the deadlock on the Tagus continuing far beyond his expectations, and the Estremaduran campaign developing behind his back. During the long weeks of tension the strain on his mind vented itself in criticism, reasonable and unreasonable, of the authorities with whom he had to work—the British and Portuguese Governments.

The administration of Spencer Perceval had done its best to maintain the war and to support its general, under great difficulties. It had not shrunk from making financial exertions of the most unprecedented kind in order to keep up the war in Portugal. As Lord Liverpool pointed out to Wellington [1], the army in the Peninsula had cost £2,778,796 in 1808, £2,639,764 in 1809; in 1810 the sum asked for had risen to £6,061,235—more than double the total of either of the preceding years. And this did not include either ordnance stores, supplies sent out in kind, or the hire of transports, which were calculated to make out £2,000,000 more. The Government had provided these sums in face of a bitter and carping opposition on the part of the Whigs, and despite of much lukewarmness among their own followers, of whom many considered that the limit of reasonable expense had been reached. As Lord Liverpool observed, the increase of the Portuguese subsidy, and the taking into British pay of the larger half of the Portuguese army, had been 'carried by a small and unwilling majority [2].' The Government had driven the money bills through the House of Commons only by smart cracking of the whip of party loyalty. They had promised Wellington that his army should be increased by 14,000 men during the course of the winter, and the promise was in the course of fulfilment. Many regiments had already arrived; all were to reach the Tagus before March was out. This had been done in a time of dire distress to the Tory party. George III had been prostrated by his last attack of insanity, which was destined to be permanent, in October 1810. As it became

[1] Lord Liverpool to Wellington, February 20, 1811.

[2] Lord Liverpool to Wellington, September 20, 1810.

certain that his recovery was not to be looked for, the appointment of the Prince of Wales as Regent was the obvious and necessary corollary. But the Prince was still reckoned a Whig, and it was believed with reason that his first act on coming into power would be to dismiss the Perceval Ministry, and to call upon Grey, Grenville, and Sheridan to form an administration. The Tories all through the winter thought that they were destined to immediate expulsion from office, and had before them a long strife with the Crown. It was only at the beginning of February 1811 that the younger George, who had taken the oath as Regent on the 6th of that month, announced, to the general surprise of the nation, that he had no intention of dismissing the Ministry, and was prepared to work with them. Perceval and Liverpool, during the three preceding months, were doing their best for the army in Portugal while they believed that a political disaster was hanging over their heads. They did not yet realize that the Prince's Whig principles had worn thin of late, and that he was tired of the dictatorial manners which Grey and Grenville had adopted towards him.

It is terrible to contemplate the results which might have followed had the Whigs come into office at this juncture. They were pledged to the theory that the Peninsular War was hopeless and ought to be abandoned. Grey and Grenville had stated that Wellington was a failure; they had denied that Talavera was a victory. Brougham had summarized the feelings of the party in a savage attack upon both Government and general in the *Edinburgh Review*. At this very moment—February 1811—Ponsonby, the leader of the opposition in the House of Commons, was preaching that 'France cannot be prevented from overrunning Spain by continuing a war in Portugal, . . . so that neither in Spain or Portugal has anything happened that can give reason to believe that the war will ever terminate to our advantage[1].' Freemantle, another leader, maintained that 'Bonaparte, having conquered the rest of the Continent, must also conquer the Peninsula, because he has greater numbers to bring up after every defeat, and therefore defeat of one of his armies was vain[2].' Every Whig journal was prophesying the

[1] Hansard for 1811, vol. xix. 397. [2] Plumer Ward's *Diary*, i. 406.

expulsion of Wellington from Portugal within a few weeks, as indeed they had been doing ever since October 1809.

All honour, therefore, is due to the statesmen who continued in the midst of all their own troubles, constitutional and financial, to give a steady support to Wellington, and to redeem the pledges which they had made to him. When Napier in his great history declares that the Ministry betrayed Wellington, that 'Perceval had neither the wisdom to support nor the manliness to put an end to the war in the Peninsula; his crooked contemptible policy was shown by withholding what was necessary to continue the contest and throwing upon the General the responsibility of failure,' he is merely venting the malignant folly of the Whigs of his day, which ought to have been forgotten by the time that he took his pen in hand, long after the war was over.

It is unfortunately true that Wellington, in the stress of waiting hours during the winter of 1810–11, used querulous and captious language concerning his supporters at home. The main point of his complaint was that he was not supplied rapidly enough with specie, that bills were sent him when he wanted dollars or guineas, and that so the pay of the army was falling into arrears. The fact was deplorable; but on a consideration of the condition of the English monetary system at this date it is hard to see how the difficulty could have been avoided. Since the suspension of the coinage of guineas in 1797, and the introduction of an almost unlimited issue of bank-notes, gold had gradually become an almost invisible commodity in Great Britain [1]. The guinea, when seen, commanded an ever-increasing premium; by 1809 it was worth £1 5*s*., or more, in paper. British silver was equally deficient; there had been none coined at the Mint since 1787, and the internal trade of the country was being transacted with difficulty, by means of Spanish dollars or half-dollars stamped with the king's head, or by local tokens struck by banks and corporations, which only served in the immediate neighbourhood of their place of issue [2]. The Bank of

[1] Note that Perceval and Liverpool inherited the paper currency of Pitt, and were not responsible for its creation.

[2] For some curious anecdotes as to the dearth of silver change see Lord Folkestone's speech quoted in Yonge's *Life of Lord Liverpool*, i. 368.

England dollar, the only coin which circulated generally, passed for 5*s.*, though it had only the value of 4*s.* 2*d.* in its weight of silver. When Great Britain could find no specie for its own internal business, the Government was required to send enormous remittances in cash to the Peninsula, because all transactions therein were made in silver or gold, and English paper was not negotiable[1]. That the coin was sent at all seems marvellous, rather than that it was sent late and in insufficient quantities. The worst time of all was in the early spring of 1811, when there was a severe commercial crisis at home, and the Government was issuing exchequer bills, to the amount of £6,000,000, as an advance to merchants and manufacturers to stave off general bankruptcy in London[2].

It was certainly an unhappy thing that Wellington could look upon the whole situation as one 'in which 'the Government chooses to undertake large services, and not to supply us with sufficient pecuniary means[3],' and could write that the present ministers complained so much of the expense of the war, that he considered it not impossible that the army might be recalled bag and baggage—a remark made not in February but in March, when Masséna had actually retreated from the Tagus[4]. This rather unjustifiable complaint was probably the direct result of Lord Liverpool's letter of February 20, in which he had set forth at length the enormous burden of the war, and expressed his doubts as to whether the augmentation of the Peninsular army by 14,000 men, for which he had just provided, could be permanently kept up[5]. He suggested that when the 'present crisis'

[1] 'How can you expect that we can buy specie here [London] with the exchange 30 per cent. against us, and guineas selling at 25 shillings?' Huskisson to Wellington (private), 19th July, 1809. *Wellington MSS.*, see Mr. Fortescue's *British Statesmen of the Great War*, p. 254.

[2] For notes on this see Walpole's *Life of Perceval*, ii. pp. 207–8.

[3] To Charles Stuart, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 462.

[4] To Admiral Berkeley, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 415.

[5] 'The recent augmentation of your force must be considered as made with reference to the present exigency. . . . We are very anxious, not with a view of abandoning, but for the purpose of maintaining the contest in the Peninsula for an indefinite time, that when the present crisis shall appear to be over, you should send home the excess of your force, after keeping 30,000 effective rank and file for Portugal, and a sufficient

(i. e. Masséna's presence at the gates of Lisbon) had come to an end, the army should send home some of its less effective regiments, and that the ideal of 30,000 effective rank and file (not including the garrison of Cadiz) would probably have to be kept in mind. But long before the dispatch of February 20 Wellington thought that he had detected an intention on Liverpool's part to bring the whole Peninsular War to an end, on financial grounds, and wrote most bitterly to his kinsman Pole, accusing the Secretary of State of being half-hearted, and showing a deep-rooted distrust of his influence in the Cabinet[1]. All this was forgotten when the firmness of the Ministry in support of the war became evident, and in later years Wellington wrote to acknowledge in the most handsome style the support that he had received from the Perceval administration[2].

During all these weeks of waiting Wellington was also troubled by problems with regard to the internal state of Portugal. Two main sources of worry can be traced in his correspondence. The first was the inefficiency of the Portuguese commissariat, which bid fair to cause absolute starvation among those brigades of the national army which were not incorporated with British divisions and supplied from the British stores. Slow and irregular

garrison for Cadiz, selecting of course those regiments to be sent home which are least efficient, and consequently least fitted for active service.'

[1] Mr. Fortescue writes: 'This was unfair. Perceval and Liverpool had deliberately turned their backs upon Pitt's old policy of spasmodic efforts all over the world, in favour of a steady and persistent feeding of the war in one quarter—the Peninsula. Wellington himself had approved the change in his letters of 1810, had named the amount of money that he wanted, and fixed the figure of the reinforcements that he asked. But in 1811 he never ceased to ask for more men and more money, till Liverpool was obliged to remind him very gently, that he was going far beyond his own estimates.' He had got to the stage of writing that Government having embarked on the contest, and chosen the best officer they could find, must give him the largest army they could collect, and reinforce it to the utmost, without asking precisely how many men were wanted, and for what precise objects. It was Mr. Fortescue who indicated to me two important passages about Liverpool which are omitted from the printed version of Wellington's letters to Pole of January 11 and March 31, 1811, in *Supplementary Dispatches*, vii. pp. 40–3 and 93.

[2] See especially Wellington to Dudley Perceval (the premier's son), June 6th, 1835, a protest against Napier's wild misrepresentations.

forwarding of provisions to the corps stationed in advanced or remote positions led to a dreadful increase in the number of sick. We find Wellington complaining that regiments which had 1,200 men in line at Bussaco could only show 1,000 or 900 under arms in February, although they had received considerable drafts from their dépôts at mid-winter. D'Urban's daily notes bear out the statements of the Commander-in-Chief. He asserts with indignation that by 'the villany of commissaries,' the same quantity of flour which provided 15½ rations for the British soldier was returned as having given only 9 to the Portuguese—the balance having been embezzled. Allowances, of course, must be made for the difficulties of a government of whose territory a good third had been depopulated by the orders of Wellington. But the trouble does not seem to have been so much the actual want of food-stuffs at head quarters [1]—great quantities were got from the Alemtejo and the north—as the inefficiency of distribution, which left outlying brigades sometimes foodless for two or three days at a time. Clothing and shoes were also very slow in arriving at the front. At the bottom the cause of all this inefficiency was probably (as Wellington observes in one letter [2]) the want of money to keep up an adequate transport service, and it might be pleaded that in the distressful condition of the country the deficit was no fault of the government, but unavoidable. Wellington's view was that with greater economy in civil expenses, and more careful supervision of commissaries and contractors, there was money enough to pay for all necessary military objects. He was probably right, but there is small wonder if a provisional government like the Regency found it hard to introduce administrative reforms in the midst of a crisis, and with the enemy almost at the gates of the capital. After all, the effort which Portugal had made was splendid, and the whole nation had accepted the awful necessity of the depopulation of its central provinces with a loyalty that was surprising, if we consider the magnitude of the sacrifice.

There was, however, a small minority of traitors still left in

[1] See Wellington to Beresford from Cartaxo, February 12. (*Dispatches*, vii. 253.)

[2] Ibid. 'The cause of the state of deficiency is the old want of money to pay for carriage.'

Portugal, and their intrigues seem to have given Wellington much concern, not because there was any danger from their personal action, but because they conveyed to Masséna the intelligence as to the condition of affairs in Lisbon, and in Europe at large, which he could not obtain in any other way, owing to the strict blockade kept up around his rear. On the last day of the old year four officers, two colonels and two majors, had fled out of Lisbon and joined the French[1]. They were all men who had quarrelled with Beresford, and deserted in revenge: but that four field officers could turn traitors at once was a most distressing sign. Wellington had fears of a general plot against the English, and was inclined to suspect the Bishop of Oporto and President Sousa of knowing more about it than befitted members of the Regency. He was apparently mistaken, though their petulance and intermittent protests against all his actions seemed to him to justify any doubts. But minor persons in Lisbon, old friends of Alorna and his Francophil policy, had contrived to open up communication with the renegade General Pamplona, and to send him newspapers, reports of the movement of troops, and other miscellaneous information, using as their intermediaries smugglers, who passed the lines at night to sell coffee, sugar, and other luxuries to the French[2]. For there was a ready market for such things in the army of Masséna. Fortunately this illicit correspondence was of little importance, since there was no solid party in Portugal in favour of Napoleon, and the information conveyed by newspapers as to affairs in Lisbon was not, at this time, at all encouraging to the French; while that as to events in England or remote parts of Spain was too old in date to be of any great profit to them.

Meanwhile Wellington regarded his position as secure for the moment. The Army of Portugal, even after Drouet's arrival, was too weak to attack him. Soult's movement from Andalusia at first caused him some uneasiness, for he

[1] Their names, San Miguel, Loulé, Candido Xavier, and Manuel de Castro, are given by Fririon (Masséna's aide-de-camp) in his diary. Major Leslie tells me that he cannot identify them in the Portuguese army-list of 1810, and thinks that two of them at least were only Ordenança officers.

[2] For details as to all this see Wellington to Charles Stuart, February 10. (*Dispatches*, vii. 237–8.)

had conceived a notion that the expedition from Andalusia, leaving Badajoz and Elvas on its left, and ignoring the Spanish Army of Estremadura, might be intending to march by Merida and Truxillo to Almaraz, and from thence to join Masséna by the circuitous route through Coria and Castello Branco[1]. He was reassured as to this possibility when the news came that Soult, unable to undertake anything bold so long as Gazan had not joined him, had sat down to besiege Olivenza on January 11th. If the Marshal intended to take all the Estremaduran fortresses before moving on, occupation could be found for him for many a week, and when La Romana's two divisions had been sent to join Mendizabal on January 22, Wellington imagined that he might regard the situation on this side as secure. It will be remembered that he gave Mendizabal elaborate advice as to the course that he was to pursue, and he was justified in believing that if that advice was followed Badajoz would never fall, and Soult for the moment would become an almost negligible quantity.

There was always the chance, however, that Soult might turn against the Alemtejo after all, and that Masséna might make a desperate effort to cross the Tagus and join him. Hence Wellington spent much thought in devising means to prevent this danger from coming into being. Beresford received elaborate orders as to the conduct that he was to pursue, with his corps south of the Tagus, in case Masséna attempted a passage, or Soult appeared before Elvas. In the latter case the French would be fought by an army composed of Mendizabal's Estremadurans, Beresford's corps, and the brigade of Portuguese line troops in Elvas, a mass of over 30,000 men. This force ought to suffice, but if the worst came, and a defeat were suffered, the army south of the Tagus would try to defend first the passages

[1] This fear is expressed in a letter to Charles Stuart dated January 16 (*Dispatches*, vii. 147), on the news that Mortier's cavalry had seized the bridge of Merida. 'The passage of the Tagus by Mortier removes to a distant period the danger of Alemtejo; but it shows that we may be attacked at an early period in our positions. For Mortier, supposing him to march by Almaraz, can be on the Zezere in the first days of February, and I think it possible that the battle for the possession of this country, and probably the fate of the Peninsula, will be fought in less than a month from this time.'

of the Zatas river (or the Benevente river as Wellington usually calls it), then those of the Almansor, and lastly the line across the neck of the Setubal peninsula, opposite Lisbon, where there was a short front of ten miles from Setubal itself (which was fortified) past the castle of Palmella to Moita on the Tagus estuary. But behind this again was the strongest defensive position of all, a Lines of Torres Vedras on a small scale[1]. The works erected here were an afterthought: they had formed no part of the original scheme for the fortification of Lisbon, but when it had been proved to Wellington that batteries on the Heights of Almada, beyond the broad Tagus mouth, might incommode the shipping in the harbour, and possibly the town itself [the range was 2,300 yards], he had ordered, early in December, that the Portuguese labourers set free from work on the old lines by Masséna's departure should be transferred to the Almada front[2]. Here a line of 8,000 yards from sea to sea was marked out, and strengthened with no less than seventeen closed redoubts, connected by a covered way. Eighty-six guns were allotted to them, and their defence was to be given over to the marines of the fleet, and the local militia and trained Ordenança (*Atiradores nacionaes*) of Lisbon. It was calculated that Beresford would find a garrison of 7,500 men already placed in these forts if he were ever forced back on to them. It seemed impossible that such a short front, so strongly held, could ever be broken through.

But all this was a precaution designed to face a very unlikely —if a possible—situation of affairs. It was much more probable that Masséna would try to pass the Tagus higher up, than that Soult would fight his way to its mouth across the Alemtejo, and every precaution was taken to give Masséna a hot reception if he should make the attempt. It was clear that his starting-point for such an enterprise must be Punhete and the mouth of the Zezere, for there were collected the ninety boats and the materials for the floating bridges which had been created by the energy of General Eblé. At Santarem, the other place where Masséna

[1] All this may be found in Wellington's dispatch of January 12, 1811, where he details the successive positions which Beresford must try to hold.

[2] For a description of this front see Jones, *Lines of Torres Vedras*, pp. 43–5.

had boats, the stock of them was known to be too small for a passage in force. Beresford, it will be remembered, had already established batteries which commanded the mouth of the Zezere, and had several times stopped small explorations by the French boats. Only on one occasion did a few succeed in running past down-stream. On the whole it was considered unlikely that Masséna would attempt such a serious matter as the crossing of the Tagus opposite Punhete. D'Urban, Beresford's chief of the staff, reported 'It is altogether improbable that he will commit himself, unless in combination with the army arriving from the south. The stream is very rapid. The boats cannot return to the original point of embarkation for a second load of men, nor to the second point for a third load, but must cross at each time to a point lower down, owing to the current. This must and will occasion great disunion and scattering among the parts of the division who first pass, all the more because they will be vigorously opposed from the beginning. It appears to me that no attempt of the kind can succeed. The Zezere-mouth alone is their *place d'armes*, and leaves little else for us to watch: hence arises for them a difficulty of accomplishing this enterprise that would appear almost unsurmountable.'[1] It is most interesting to compare this judgement from the English side with the discussion of the problem by the French generals, which followed a few days later, and with which we shall presently have to deal[2].

Meanwhile both parties were decidedly nervous as to the possible movements of their adversaries. If Wellington sometimes thought that Masséna might make an attempt to cross the Tagus, Masséna was very reasonably suspicious that Wellington might make a surprise-attack upon Junot's corps along the upper Rio Mayor, and try to cut it off, before it could be succoured by Ney from Thomar and Golegão. This suspicion led to the only skirmish that marked the month of January. On the 19th the Marshal ordered Junot to make a reconnaissance in force beyond the river, along the Alcoentre road, to see whether a rumour that an English division had been brought up behind Pack's

[1] From a long note by D'Urban in his unpublished diary, dated January 22, 1811.

[2] See pp. 77-9.

Portuguese outposts were true. The Duke of Abrantes conducted the affair himself, at the head of 3,000 infantry of Clausel's division and 500 horse. He pressed in the cavalry screen in front of Pack, consisting of a squadron of the 1st Hussars of the King's German Legion, and occupied the village of Rio Mayor, from which he drove out two Portuguese companies. Discovering nothing in reserve save Pack's brigade, drawn up for resistance on the heights to the rear, and noting no red-coated battalions, the French withdrew after a little skirmishing, and returned to their lines. During this trifling affair Junot received a painful but not dangerous wound from the carbine of a hussar vedette. The ball struck him on the side of the nose, broke the bone there, and lodged in his cheek; but it was extracted with no difficulty, and he was able to resume command of his corps within a few days[1]. Nothing further occurred on this front till February 10, when the English cavalry paid a return visit to the French outlying picket east of the Rio Mayor, drove it in, and retired with an officer and ten men prisoners.

On February 5th the third and final period of Masséna's stay on the Tagus may be said to have begun, with the arrival of the last orders from Paris which he was destined to receive. He had been more than a month without any official intelligence of what was going on behind him, the latest dispatches to hand having been those brought by Drouet at the end of the old year. But General Foy now appeared with the orders which the Emperor had issued on December 22nd. He had cut his way from Ciudad Rodrigo across the eastern mountains, and along the Estrada Nova, at the head of a column of 1,800 men, mostly composed of drafts belonging to the 2nd Corps, which he had found waiting on the Spanish frontier. The rains had been continuous, the badness of the road was notorious, and Colonel Grant with a small party of local Ordenança hung about the route of the column for the last five days of its march, and slew or captured more than a hundred stragglers. The total loss by fatigue and sickness was much greater[2].

[1] The best account of this reconnaissance is in the Journal of Sprünglin, pp. 462–3.

[2] There is a good account of this march by Foy in his *Vie Militaire*, ed. Girod de l'Ain, pp. 127–8.

The orders brought by Foy were not particularly comforting to Masséna. He was bidden to hold on to his position till he had received succour from the Army of the South, and also from the Army of the Centre. Mortier's corps, as he had already been assured, would at some not-distant date make its appearance on the Tagus, in the direction of Montalvão and Villaflor. A column from the Army of the Centre was to advance to Plasencia, and communicate with the Marshal via Coria and Castello Branco. He was not expected to take the offensive till he should have received these reinforcements, but he must use Drouet's troops to keep open communications with Almeida, and 'regularize' the war. There was no order for him to cross the Tagus into the Alemtejo in search of Mortier: it was Mortier who was to come to him. Practically all this amounted to a command to wait and endure—the initiative was to come from outside, with the arrival of reinforcements from the south and east. 'L'empereur appelait son armée à une lutte de fatigue et de persévérance,' as Foy commented.

But this 'strife of toil and perseverance' had already been going on since November, the dispatch was forty-four days old when it reached Masséna, and the co-operation by the Armies of the South and Centre, which it promised, showed no signs of coming to pass. As a matter of fact, when Foy arrived, Mortier's divisions were absorbed in the siege of Badajoz, and Soult, with Mendizabal upon his hands, could have moved neither a detachment nor the whole 5th Corps to the Tagus. The promised assistance from the Army of the Centre, a mere column of 3,000 men under Lahoussaye, had advanced first to Truxillo and then to Plasencia, as was promised, but had turned back for want of provisions long before reaching the Portuguese frontier. Masséna pushed several reconnaissances towards the upper Tagus, in the hope of getting information as to the appearance of friendly troops on either side of the river, but could learn nothing. He says that he judged from the tranquillity shown by the English south of the Tagus that there could be no French force near enough to cause them disquietude. Meanwhile the power of the Army of Portugal to live by plundering the country-side was being reduced every day. The distance at which food had to be sought was ever increasing, and the loss suffered by the parties which were

cut off while raiding was growing daily more serious. The number of prisoners taken by the British cavalry on Junot's flank and Drouet's front amounted to several hundreds in January and February[1]. Many more were destroyed by the Ordenança, who were goaded to ferocious activity by the ever-growing cruelty of the marauders, and dogged every expedition that set out with an ever-increasing skill. They avoided the main bodies, but trapped and shot small parties that strayed more than a few hundred yards from the column, with patient persistence.

After waiting for a fortnight after the arrival of Foy and the imperial dispatches, and learning nothing of any approach of the long-promised troops of Mortier, Masséna assembled the corps leaders and certain other generals at Golegão on February 19th, at a meeting which he carefully refrained from calling a council of war. That he should do so was in itself a sign of flagging confidence; he had shown himself very autocratic hitherto, and had asked the advice of none of his lieutenants. Now he regarded the situation as so desperate that he thought that he must either give up the game and retreat from the Tagus, or risk an attack on the allied forces south of that river, with the object of crossing into the Alemtejo and going off to join Soult. His own mind was practically made up in favour of the former alternative; but he knew that if he took it without consulting his lieutenants, they would probably report him to the Emperor as having despaired before all was lost. The council of war was really called for the purpose of arguing them down, and committing them to the policy of retreat[2], so

[1] For details of this see the Diary of Tomkinson of the 16th Light Dragoons. His own regiment alone brought in 82 prisoners between January 19 and February 23. There were some very fine feats of arms on a small scale in this outpost fighting, notably a capture made by Lieutenant Bishop on January 19th, when with six men he charged twenty chasseurs, and took eight with twelve horses.

[2] The best account of this council of war is Foy's (in his *Vie Militaire*, pp. 129–32), which is contemporary. It differs largely from Koch's narrative in his *Vie de Masséna*. It is quite convincing when compared with Masséna's explanatory dispatch to Berthier of March 6th, which sets forth his own arguments for the retreat. They are the same which Foy attributes to him in the précis of the meeting of February 18th,

that they should not be able to protest against it at a later date.

The three corps-commanders came to the meeting each with a scheme of his own to develop. Ney proposed to pass the Tagus by force, with the whole army, to abandon Portugal for the moment, and to join Soult. The united armies should establish themselves on the Guadiana, complete the conquest of Estremadura, and then, after calling in all possible reinforcements, take in hand the invasion of the Alemtejo, and an attack on Lisbon from the south. Junot hotly combated this scheme: to pass into the Alemtejo meant the surrender of all Portugal to Wellington, who would chase the 9th Corps out of the Beira; it would be 'giving up the whole game.' He wished to establish a bridge-head on the other side of the Tagus, but not to send the whole army across, merely to occupy it with a strong detachment, and then to wait for Mortier's promised appearance. Reynier's scheme was a variant of Junot's, but infinitely more dangerous, for he was a general of second-rate capacity. He would throw one corps across the Tagus, to scour the Alemtejo for provisions, and to try to find Mortier. The other two should hold on at Santarem, in the entrenched positions which had already checked Wellington for three months. The English general, he said, was timid, and would never dare to assault these formidable works, even in the absence of one-third of the army.

Masséna had no difficulty in demolishing this last proposal. The passage of the Tagus would be a dangerous and difficult operation in face of an enemy who was upon the alert, who had fortified all the obvious landing-places on the opposite bank, and who was known to have established a perfect system of signals and communications. It might very probably end in a bloody repulse. But granting that it succeeded, and that a corps of 15,000 men got over into the Alemtejo, victory would have consequences more disastrous than failure. For Wellington would fall upon the two corps left north of the Tagus with his main force, perhaps 60,000 men; and when separated from the troops detached in the Alemtejo the Army of Portugal would have only 30,000 in line. 'N'est-il pas à craindre que cette portion de l'armée, séparée de l'autre, ne soit attaquée, battue, détruite, par un ennemi à qui, pour nous faire beaucoup de mal, il ne manque

que de le vouloir?' This was absolutely irrefutable logic; nothing could be more insane than Reynier's proposal to separate the French army into two parts by the broad stream of the Tagus. Wellington could have destroyed with ease the two-thirds of it left north of the river, unless that portion should be ready to evacuate all else that it held and shut itself up to be besieged in Santarem—the only possible centre of resistance. But to be shut up in Santarem meant starvation on a worse scale than had been hitherto endured. For the army, losing its old broad foraging-ground, would be compelled to live entirely upon what might be sent it from the northern Alemtejo by the detached corps; and that region was known to be barren and thinly peopled, and had probably already been stripped of its resources by Wellington's orders. (As a matter of fact such orders had been issued some time back.) 'Faut-il pour un intérêt si modique que celui de manger un mois dans l'Alemtejo risquer une pareille opération?' asked the Marshal. And any dispassionate judge must decide that his question could only be answered in the negative. Ney's proposal, to take the whole army across the Tagus into the Alemtejo, was not quite so easy to dispose of. But there stood against its first necessary preliminary—the passage of the river—the same objections that were registered against Reynier's plan. The passage might end in a repulse, and the position of the army would be very bad if, having concentrated at Punhete (or at Santarem) for the crossing, it found itself encircled by all Wellington's forces, which would march in upon it the moment that Ney's and Junot's corps were withdrawn from their present cantonments. The Marshal disliked the idea of having to fight a battle, with the Tagus at his back, and all his possible lines of retreat intercepted [1]. Or again, the crossing might succeed, so far as the throwing of a vanguard across to the Alemtejo bank went. But Wellington would close in upon the army while it was actually passing, and might easily destroy its rearguard, or even its larger half, by attacking when the rest

[1] 'Bientôt viendrait le moment où on serait forcé de se jeter sur l'une ou sur l'autre rive; et alors on pourrait trouver les têtes-de-pont entourées par une contrevallation de l'ennemi, ou bien l'armée se verrait forcée à recevoir bataille avec un fleuve au dos, en voulant se porter sur la rive droite.' Masséna to Berthier, March 6.

was across the water, and unable to return with sufficient promptness.

If the army were so lucky as to get off entire into the barren Alemtejo, and to unite with the 5th Corps on the Guadiana, Wellington, as Junot had pointed out, would have a free hand in northern and central Portugal, and would sweep Claparéde out of it, while he need not be seriously alarmed at any attack on Lisbon from the south of the Tagus, for the city was covered by the Almada lines [1] and could not be harassed from this quarter. Meanwhile the Army of Portugal would be cut off from all the supplies and reinforcements which were accumulating for it on the frontier of Spain, at Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca; 'it would be going off to a distance from its real line of operations and of communications.'

Masséna then came to the point: having argued down the schemes of Reynier and Ney, he developed his own determination, which was to hold on for the few days more that seemed possible. The marauding operations that fed the army were rapidly growing less productive, and the moment was approaching when the daily plunder would no longer meet the daily consumption, and then, in case the long-expected Soult did not appear, the army must retire on to the line of the Mondego [2]. There, in a country comparatively undamaged, Masséna hoped to hold out some fifty or sixty days at the least: the whole 9th Corps would be available for opening and maintaining the communications with Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, and reinforcements and stores would easily be brought forward [3]. But no further offensive movements could be contemplated; the army was exhausted and needed a long rest; in the end it would probably have to retire within the borders of Spain—perhaps to Alcantara on the Tagus, perhaps into Leon.

Ney and Reynier seem to have retired from the conference

[1] It is interesting to see from Masséna's dispatch of March 6 that he was aware of the existence both of the Setubal and the Almada fortifications.

[2] Foy, present at the council, where he was asked to comment on the Emperor's last orders, which he had brought himself, renders Masséna's decision in his diary as: 'Que faut-il donc faire? Tenir ici le plus longtemps que nous pourrons: voir d'ici là ce qui se passera dans l'Alemtejo: puis, si rien n'est changé, nous transporter sur le Mondego, en laissant un corps d'armée à la rive gauche de cette rivière.' [*Vie Militaire*, p. 131.]

[3] This comes from Masséna's dispatch to Berthier of March 6th.

rather talked down than convinced, and the latter sent in to his Commander-in-Chief a sort of protest, taking the form of a précis of the meeting, in which the arguments used and the result arrived at were so misrepresented that Masséna caused a formal document to be drawn up and signed by five other generals present at the council, in which it was declared that the précis was wholly incorrect. Apparently Reynier had intended to get his protest to the Emperor's hands, in order to free himself from any responsibility in approving a retreat which he thought that his master would condemn [1].

The few weeks for which the Army of Portugal retained its position after the conference at Golegão, were spent by all its units as a mere period of preparation for the retreat, for the generals had long made up their minds that Soult would never appear on the Tagus. They seem even to have thought that he might have retired from Estremadura, for the distant thunder of the bombardment of Badajoz, which had been audible at Punhete during the first half of February, seemed to have ceased. This must have been due to some change of atmospheric conditions, for it was going on with redoubled energy in the last days of the month. But Masséna and his lieutenants argued that either the siege had been raised, or else Soult had taken the place, and yet was not marching to the Tagus. They seem to have regarded his doings as a negligible quantity, when coming to their final resolve.

During the last days of February all the corps received preliminary orders, which could have no other meaning than that a retreat had been decided upon. The divisions were ordered to send their parks and heavy baggage to the rear, and the divisional batteries were told to complete as many gun-teams with good serviceable horses as was possible, by destroying caissons, and drafting their animals on to the guns. In some cases batteries had to be reduced to three or four pieces, even when half the caissons had been burnt. The 8th Corps destroyed fifty-one caissons on the 24th–27th February, yet still could find only four horses each for those remaining, including animals that were sick or barely fit for service [2]. But the

[1] For details as to this see Foy's narrative quoted above.

[2] Journal of Noël of the Artillery of the 8th Corps, p. 137.

transport of food was even more important than that of artillery material; in the central magazines there was gathered together some fifteen days' of biscuit for the whole army, the flour for which had been procured with the greatest difficulty in small quantities, and had been hoarded to the last. This was issued to the regiments, with stringent orders not to use it till the actual retreat began. Some units were so pressed by starvation that they began to consume it, and ultimately started with only eight or ten days consumption in their packs or on their waggons. The whole of the transport was in a deplorable state; if the cavalry and artillery had lost 5,088 horses since November, the train had been depleted of draught-beasts in a still greater proportion, since they were both weaker to start with, and less carefully kept. Some regiments had no longer any horses attached to them, and could only show a few pack-mules and asses, quite insufficient for carrying their reserve ammunition and food [1]. Two things were certain—the one that if the army could not pick up provisions on the way by marauding, it would ultimately have to retire to its base within the frontiers of Spain. And no food could be collected for some days, since the first five stages of the retreat would be through a region already stripped bare. The second was that the ammunition might suffice for one general engagement, supposing that there was heavy fighting during the retreat, but that it would hardly be able to serve for two.

On March 3rd Masséna issued the orders which marked his determination to retreat at once. Ney was directed to march on the next day from Thomar, with Marchand's division and some cavalry, and join Drouet at Leiria in the rear—they were ultimately to be the covering force of the retiring army. On the 5th Reynier was directed to send back his first division (Merle) from Santarem towards the rear, while the second division (Heudelet) continued to hold the old lines. On this same day Ney's second division (Mermet) evacuated Torres Novas, and marched northward to Ourem near Leiria, while one of Junot's divisions (Solignac) massed itself at Pernes, to await the arrival of the other (Clausel), which was to hold the outposts till the

[1] For general statements as to the miserable state of the material of the army see Masséna's dispatch to Berthier of March 6, 1811.

last moment. This was the critical day of the concentration, for of the eight divisions forming the Army of Portugal five had started off, leaving three (Heudelet at Santarem, Clausel on the Rio Mayor, Loison at Punhete) to hold the old positions. If Wellington had attacked in force on the 5th, it seems certain that he must have destroyed these covering forces, which in their scattered position could not possibly have held their ground. But the British general, as we shall see, was engaged in a scheme of his own, and did not at first detect the full meaning of the French movements.

For Wellington at this moment was busy in developing an encircling attack on the whole of the French positions, and it was "not yet ready"[2]. On February 23rd he had made up his mind to strike the moment that a large body of reinforcements, already overdue from England and the Mediterranean, should have arrived. The plan was that the main army, while holding Reynier in check at Santarem with one or two divisions, should attack Junot on the Rio Mayor with the bulk of its force. At the same time Beresford, drawing his corps to the north of the Tagus by the boat-bridge at Abrantes, was to fall upon Loison at Punhete, and (as it was hoped) thus distract Ney, whose duty would be divided between the succouring of Junot and that of the division on the Zezere. But, even if he turned most of the reserves in the direction of the Rio Mayor, the long distance

[1] This plan comes out in full in the diary of Beresford's Chief of the Staff. D'Urban writes under the 23rd February: 'The Marshal tells me that Lord Wellington means to attack, and his (Beresford's) own share is that he must turn and force the French left, when the reinforcements should arrive. Some of them are already on their march up from Lisbon. On their arrival Lord Wellington will attack the French right, on the Rio Mayor, while Marshal Beresford crosses the Tagus at Abrantes, and attacks the force on the Zezere at the same time. Orders to inquire how far, in attacking the corps at Punhete, Amoreira can be turned, and the heights of Montalvão gained, with consequent advantage of ground in coming on the enemy upon the Zezere.' The local reports were prepared by D'Urban on the 25th. The only allusion to the plan in the Wellington dispatches is in the last paragraph of the letter to Lord Liverpool of February 23rd, in which the phrase occurs, 'I cannot venture to detach troops [to Estremadura] even after the reinforcements shall arrive: and if the weather should hold up a little I must try something else—of greater extent but more doubtful result.'

would prevent them from arriving in time. Junot would almost certainly be overwhelmed by superior numbers, while Reynier was being 'contained,' and while Ney's columns were still far off.

Preparations and reconnaissances in view of this great attack began to be made, but the reinforcements were slow to arrive. Six thousand men were due, mainly the troops which afterwards formed the 7th Division and the second British brigade of the 6th. But on March 1 only the *Chasseurs Britanniques* from Cadiz, and half of the 51st had yet landed [1]. Of the other expected regiments the bulk turned up in Lisbon harbour on the 4th–6th March, viz. the 2nd, 85th, 1/36th, 2/52nd, but the light infantry brigade of the King's German Legion did not come in till the 21st of the same month. It was undoubtedly the accidental delay of a few days in the arrival of these seven battalions that caused Wellington to hold back; if Masséna had postponed his move for a week more, all would have been in line save the two belated German battalions, and the attack would have been delivered about the 10th–12th of March.

Set on the carrying out of his own plan, which could not begin to work for a few days more, Wellington was evidently not fully prepared for the suddenness of Masséna's retreat. On the 4th of March, the day when Ney's corps began to file to the rear, he wrote to Beresford, 'I think it likely that the enemy is about some move, but have been so frequently disappointed that it is impossible to be certain. There is no alteration whatever in their front.' This was true, for Junot and Reynier had not moved on a man upon the 4th. On the next—the critical—day he himself made a survey of Reynier's lines in front of Santarem, found them still manned by Heudelet's division, but thought that he could detect that the artillery in the French works was less numerous than on the previous day. There were no howitzers in the great work across the high road, but only what appeared to be pieces of small calibre. He could not perceive guns any

[1] The *Chasseurs Britanniques* had landed very early in February, and a wing of the 51st on the 25th of that month. But the bulk of the transport fleet from England only was reported at the Tagus mouth on March 4th, and began to land men next day—the critical day of Masséna's retreat. The ships with the German light brigade had sailed late, and came in even later in proportion.

longer upon the main heights in front of Santarem; bushes seemed to have been laid to cover the stations which they had occupied. But the outposts were the same, and he did not observe any other change on the heights, excepting that all the troops visible upon them were fully accoutred. He concluded that no general movement of Reynier's corps had taken place. 'It is probable that baggage and heavy artillery may have been sent off, but the effective part of the army still remains in position.' There was no obvious alteration visible along Junot's front, where Clausel was that day holding all the outposts, Solignac having marched back to Pernes.

If Wellington had attacked at once that day, with the troops that were up in his front line, the Light Division and the 1st Division, in front of Santarem, while demonstrating with Pack's Portuguese and the cavalry brigades along the Rio Mayor to detain Clausel, it is probable that he might have made great havoc of Heudelet's division, which was holding a front too long for its strength, and had no supports, since the rest of the 2nd Corps was a march to the rear by now. But he was still thinking of his own plan; the fleet, with the bulk of the expected battalions, was reported at the mouth of the Tagus, and one regiment had actually landed. Wherefore he wrote to Beresford, 'the reinforcements have arrived, and we shall be able in a few days to attack the enemy, if he retains this position, or possibly to attack him in any other which he may take up.' Meanwhile the rear divisions of the army were ordered to close in; on the evening of March 5th Cole (4th Division) was brought up to Cartaxo, while Campbell (6th Division) moved out from the old lines to Azambuja, which Cole had left. The 3rd Division was ordered up from Alcoentre to join Pack's Portuguese on the Rio Mayor. Beresford was directed to bring the 2nd Division across the Tagus at Abrantes, and to attack the French on the Zezere (Loison's division) the moment that he saw any signs of their being about to move off[1].

But all this was too late: the only chance of destroying Masséna's rearguard would have been to have attacked on the

[1] Most of these orders will be found in the early (6 a.m.) dispatch of March 5th to Beresford. The rest are mentioned as having been ordered to take place on the 5th in the dispatch to Beresford of the 6th.

morning of the 5th with the troops that were already on the spot. And this Wellington would not do, because he thought that Reynier and Junot were still in position 'with the effective part of the army.' On the following morning it was too late: Heudelet had evacuated Santarem, and Clausel the line of the Rio Mayor, after dusk; and each having made a long night-march, the one was at Ponte de Almonda near Golegão, the other near Torres Novas, before noon on the 6th. Heudelet had blown up the bridge of Alviella, Clausel that of Pernes, to detain the pursuers. The enemy had gained a full march upon the British in this direction. On the other flank Beresford brought the 2nd Division over the Tagus on the 6th, but finding that Loison had made no movement had not attacked him, his orders being to fall on only when he saw the enemy break up from his positions.

On the early morning of the same day Wellington had found that Santarem was empty and occupied it. The Light Division and Pack were sent in pursuit of Junot, and reached Pernes: the 1st Division followed Reynier, and had the head of its column at the broken bridge of the Alviella by the afternoon. The 4th and 6th Divisions, coming up from the rear, entered Santarem, while the 3rd Division reached the line of the Rio Mayor and followed the Light Division. The 5th Division and Campbell's Portuguese were still far to the rear. On this day Wellington made up his mind, from the signs before him, that Masséna was in full march for Coimbra and the north, and did not intend to fight a battle[1]. The only puzzling sign was that Loison's division still remained stationary on the Zezere. Was it even now possible that the other corps were going to join him for an attack on Abrantes, an attempt to cross the Tagus near it, or a retreat into Spain via the Castello Branco road? This was not likely: for if such had been Masséna's plan, Ney would have arrived to join Loison already, and they would have commenced their movement beyond the Zezere. Wellington, however, did not feel quite certain as to what was the French scheme till Loison burnt his boats and bridges on the night of the 6th–7th, and moved off towards Thomar, in the same direction as the rest of the French army. It is clear that if Beresford had been

[1] See Wellington to Beresford, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 344.

ordered to fall upon Loison in force upon the afternoon of the 6th, he might have done him much harm, for there lay upon the Zezere only a single French infantry division and a cavalry brigade, while Beresford had at Abrantes, beside the garrison, an English and a Portuguese division of infantry, and as much cavalry at least as Loison possessed.

On the 7th Ney and Drouet were halted at Leiria to cover the arrival of the rest of the army. Reynier marched from Golegão to Thomar; Junot from Torres Novas to Chão de Maçans; Loison was at dawn close to Thomar, after a night march, leaving his boats and bridges blazing behind him as a beacon for Beresford's benefit. It was clear that the French were all making for the Coimbra roads, and had no designs west of the Zezere. The English cavalry, following on the heels of both Reynier's and Junot's columns, informed Wellington that the enemy was apparently about to use both roads towards the Mondego, that by Leiria and Pombal, and that by Chão de Maçans and Ancião. The British general expressed some surprise at this, remarking in a letter to Beresford that the latter road was so bad that he marvelled that everything had not gone by the infinitely superior Leiria chaussée, the main road to the north [1]. Meanwhile, of his own troops Beresford had crossed the Zezere, but did not reach Thomar; Nightingale's brigade of the 1st Division moved on from the bridge of the Alviella to Atalaya beyond Golegão, the Light Division from Pernes advanced to Arga and La Marosa on the Torres Novas–Thomar road. The 4th and 6th Divisions reached Golegão in the afternoon. But hearing of Ney's and Drouet's concentration at Leiria, and doubtful whether he would not find that the rest of the enemy was about to take shelter behind them, Wellington resolved not to push any more troops in the Thomar direction, but to keep a large mass upon the Santarem–Leiria–Coimbra road. The bulk of the 1st Division (all save Nightingale's brigade) and the 3rd Division were halted at Alcanhede and Pernes, and thither too the 5th Division and the Portuguese brigades from the rear were directed. It must be confessed that this was not a very rapid or vigorous pursuit: Wellington was waiting on the enemy's movements, rather than forcing

[1] Wellington to Beresford, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 346.

them to take such directions as best suited himself. But it must be remembered that he had been compelled to advance ere yet his own preparations were made, four or five days before he had intended to make his great concentric attack, and two factors were against him. The first was the eternal food-problem; the divisions had marched unexpectedly, with such supplies as they had in hand; they were unable to get anything from the country, which the French had stripped bare during the last three months. The rations for them were being brought up from the rear, but if they outmarched them they must starve: hence there were reasons against hurry. The second cause of delay was that Wellington wished to have his whole army in hand, if the enemy should turn and show fight, and the divisions which had started from the Torres Vedras Lines on the first notice of Masséna's departure on the 5th were still far to the rear, viz. the 5th and the Portuguese battalions which had once been Le Cor's and was now under Campbell. The new 7th Division, which had just landed, had not yet commenced its march from Lisbon.

The aspect of the region through which the army was marching was piteous in the extreme. Santarem town was a wreck, 'the houses torn and dilapidated, the streets strewn with household furniture half-burnt and destroyed, many streets quite impassable with filth and rubbish, with an occasional man, horse, or donkey rotting, and corrupting the air with pestilential vapours: a few miserable inhabitants like living skeletons[1].' The countryside was worse—cottages burnt and unroofed, and corpses of murdered peasants, some fresh, some mere heaps of bones, lying in every ravine. The survivors were just emerging from woods or caverns to cut up the French sick and stragglers. A single quotation may suffice to give some idea of the wayside sights of this distressing march. It comes from a 3rd Division chronicler, who is describing the village of Porto de Mos, south of Leiria: 'When we entered the place, there was a large convent fronting us, which, as well as many of the houses, had been set on fire by the French. I never before witnessed such destruction: floors torn up, beds cut in pieces, their contents thrown about intermixed with kitchen utensils, broken mirrors, china, &c.

[1] Memoirs of George Simmons of the 95th, p. 137.

There was a large fire in the chapel, on which had been heaped broken pieces of the altar, wooden images, picture frames, and the ornamental woodwork of the organ. Searching for a clean place to put down bags of biscuit, we found a door leading to a chamber apart from the chapel. It was quite dark, so I took up a burning piece of wood to inspect it. It was full of half-consumed human bodies, some lying, others kneeling or leaning against the walls. The floor was covered with ashes, in many places still red-hot. Such an appalling sight I have never witnessed. Of those who had sunk on the floor nothing remained but bones: those who were in a kneeling or standing posture were only partially consumed. The expression of their scorched faces was horrible beyond description. In a bag lying at the upper end of the apartment was the dead body of a young child, who had been strangled: the cord used was still tight about its little neck [1].'

It was on the morning that followed his arrival at Torres Novas (March 8th) that Wellington, encouraged by the reports of his cavalry scouts, to the effect that the French were marching day and night, and showed no wish to fight, issued the orders already alluded to in a previous chapter, which bade Beresford turn back the 2nd Division, and march with it and the 4th to the relief of Badajoz [2]. The report of Menacho's death and of the rapid advance of the French siege-works had just reached him. Beresford was to take with him Hamilton's Portuguese division, which had not yet passed the Tagus, and De Grey's cavalry brigade. The boat-bridge at Abrantes was floated down to Tancos near Punhete, in order to save the 2nd and 4th Divisions some miles of march in their journey to the Alemtejo. These troops turned back, and were nearing Tancos on the following day, when they received orders to halt. The French, so the advanced cavalry reported, after marching hitherto day

[1] From the Memoirs of Donaldson of the 94th, p. 104. Passing through Porto de Mos on September 29, 1910, I thought that I would try to discover whether any memory of this horrid tragedy survived. The sacristan, of whom I made inquiries, at once took me to a ruined chamber to the left of the church, and told me that 200 people had been burned there in the 'time of the French.' A new sacristy had been built to replace it in 1814, the chamber being held accursed.

[2] See Chapter II above, p. 60, and Wellington, *Dispatches*, vii. 350–1.

and night, had come to a stand at Pombal, north of Leiria, where Ney, Junot, and Drouet were now all massed. Though Reynier was said to have taken another road, that by Espinhal, Wellington was not sure that Masséna did not intend to fight, and if so, he wished to have the 4th Division with him, and De Grey's heavy dragoons. 'In this case it is desirable,' he writes, 'that I should be a little stronger, and as Badajoz is not yet pressed . . . I have sent to Cole to desire that his division and the dragoons march to-morrow for Cacharia. I shall then be as strong as the enemy, or very nearly.' The 2nd Division was to halt and wait further orders. It was not till the 12th that it was let loose, and told to resume its march to the Alemtejo: Cole and De Grey were not sent back from the main army till the 16th. Meanwhile Badajoz, as we have already seen, fell by Imaz's pusillanimity on March 10—a date too early for Beresford to have saved it, even if he had continued the march originally prescribed to him on the 8th of that month.

Before Wellington sent on their southward journey the three divisions which were to form the future Army of Estremadura, stirring events had begun to occur on the Leiria-Coimbra road, and the general course of Masséna's retreat had already been settled.

SECTION XXIII: CHAPTER IV

EVENTS IN THE SOUTH OF SPAIN. THE BATTLE OF BARROSA

In the second chapter of this volume we dealt with Soult's expedition to Estremadura and its results, but had to defer for later consideration the events which brought him back in haste to Andalusia the moment that Badajoz had fallen (March 12th). These must now be explained.

When his 20,000 men, collected from all the three corps which formed the Army of the South, set out on the last day of the old year 1810, Soult left behind him three problems, each of which (as he was well aware) might assume a dangerous aspect at any moment. We have already indicated their character[1]. Would Victor, with 19,000 men left to him for the blockade of Cadiz, be able to hold with security the immense semicircle of lines and batteries which threatened the island stronghold of the Cortes? Would the provisional garrison which had been patched up for Seville prove strong enough to defend that capital and its arsenals against any possible attack of roving Spanish detachments, from the mountains of the west and south? Would Sebastiani and the 4th Corps be able to beat back any attempt by the Army of Murcia to trespass upon the limits of the broad and rugged province of Granada? We may add that it was conceivable that all these three problems might demand a simultaneous solution. For if all the Spanish forces had been guided by a single capable brain, nothing would have been more obvious to conceive than a plan for setting them all to work at once. If a sortie from Cadiz were taken in hand, it would have the best chance of success supposing that Sebastiani were to be distracted by an invasion of Granada, and Seville threatened by any force that could be collected in the Condado de Niebla, or the mountains above Ronda.

[1] See pp. 57–8 above.

Soult, as Napoleon pointed out to him two months later[1], had committed a considerable fault by not putting all the divisions left behind in Andalusia under a single commander, responsible for all parts of the kingdom alike. Victor was given no authority over Sebastiani, nor even over Daricau, who had been left as governor of Seville, or Godinot, whose depleted division occupied the province of Cordova. Napoleon, always suspicious of Soult, accused him of having neglected this precaution because he was jealous of Victor, and would not make him as great as himself[2]. Whether this was so or not, it is at any rate clear that the position was made much more dangerous by the fact that each of the three problems named above would be presented to a different commander, who would be prone to think of his own troubles alone, and to neglect those of his colleagues. If all three dangers became threatening at the same moment, each general would regard his own as the most important, and bestow comparatively little care on those which menaced the others. As a matter of fact, Victor was almost destroyed, because Sebastiani did not come to his help, when the sally from Cadiz took place early in March; and Seville was in serious danger a few days later, because there was no one who could order Godinot to march to its aid from Cordova without delay.

Soult was fully aware of all the possible perils of his absence. Apparently he thought Sebastiani was in the greater danger, for he requisitioned only a few cavalry and artillery from the 4th Corps, and left it practically intact to defend the province of Granada against the Army of Murcia. As to Seville, he considered that it could only be endangered by Ballasteros, and for that reason did his best to destroy that general's division, by causing Gazan to hunt it as far as the borders of Portugal—a diversion which nearly wrecked the Estremaduran expedition for

[1] *Correspondance*, no. 17,531. 'Le siège de Cadix n'aurait pas couru les chances qu'il vient de courir si, en partant pour l'Estrémadure, le duc de Dalmatie avait mis le corps du général Sebastiani et la division Godinot sous les ordres du Maréchal duc de Bellune [Victor] . . . il aurait alors eu trois fois plus de troupes qu'il n'en aurait fallu.'

[2] 'Soult vient de me faire une grande sottise: il aurait dû laisser à Victor le commandement de toutes les troupes d'Andalousie. Il ne l'a pas fait, de peur que Victor ne fût aussi grand que lui.' Foy's interview with Napoleon in his *Vie Militaire*, p. 140.

lack of infantry [1]. When Gazan had driven Ballasteros over the Guadiana, after the action of Castillejos (January 25), the Marshal thought that the Spaniard was out of the game, and no longer in a position to do harm—in which he erred, for this irrepressible enemy was back in Andalusia within a few weeks, and was actually threatening Seville early in March.

But the greatest danger was really on the side of Cadiz, where Victor, deprived of nearly all his cavalry and one regiment of infantry for the Estremaduran expedition, had also to furnish outlying detachments—a garrison for Xeres and the column with which General Remond was operating in the Condado de Niebla, far to the west [2]. He had only 19,000 men left for the defence of the Lines, of which a considerable proportion consisted of artillery, sappers, and marine troops, needed for the siege but useless for a fight in the open, if the enemy should make a sally by sea against his rear. The Duke of Belluno was anxious, and rightly so: for the nearest possible succours were Sebastiani's troops in Granada and Malaga, many marches away, while the garrison of Cadiz was very strong, and indeed outnumbered his own force. At the beginning of February it comprised, including the urban militia, nearly 20,000 Spanish troops; Copons had just been withdrawn from the west to join it. There was also an Anglo-Portuguese division. General Graham had been left a considerable force, even after Wellington withdrew certain regiments to join in the defence of the Lines of Torres Vedras. He had two composite battalions of the Guards, the 2/47th, 2/67th, 2/87th, a half battalion of the 2/95th, the two battalions of the 20th Portuguese, and a provisional battalion of German recruits [3], as also two squadrons of the 2nd Hussars of the King's German Legion, and two field batteries. The whole amounted to between 5,000 and 6,000 men. It is curious to note that Napoleon, in the dispatch by which he spurred Soult on to his Estremaduran expedition, assured him 'that there had never been more than three English regiments at Cadiz, and that they had all gone to Lisbon,' so that the Isle of Leon and city were only defended

[1] See above, p. 33. [2] See above, p. 31.

[3] Whom Wellington (in his dispatch to Graham of December 31) calls 'the German deserters'—they having been mainly men who had absconded from the French armies.

by 'ten thousand unhappy Spaniards without resolution or power to resist[1].' When the Emperor's directions were based upon information so utterly incorrect as this, it was hard for his generals to satisfy him!

Within a few days of the withdrawal of the detachment taken by Soult from Victor, the news came to Cadiz that the 1st Corps had been weakened: and when the destination of the expedition was known, it seemed probable that no reserves had been left at Seville on which the besieging force could count. The idea of an attack on Victor was at once broached by the Regency, and accepted by General Graham; after some discussion, it was considered best not to assail the lines by a disembarkation from the Isle of Leon, but to land as large a force as could be spared in the rear of the enemy, at Tarifa, Algesiras, or some other point of Southern Andalusia which was in the hands of the Allies. Such a movement, if properly conducted, would compel Victor to draw backward, in order to hold off the Allies from the Lines. He would have to fight at some distance inland, leaving a minimum garrison to protect his forts and batteries, and it was proposed that the fleet and the troops left in Cadiz should fall upon them during his enforced absence.

The execution of this plan was deferred for some weeks, partly because of the difficulty of providing transport by sea for a large expeditionary force, partly because Gazan was unexpectedly drawn back into Andalusia by Ballasteros's division, and was at the end of January in a position from which he might easily have reinforced Victor. When he had gone off to Estremadura, in the wake of Soult, the problem became simpler. After drawing back Copons's division from the Condado de Niebla to Cadiz (as has already been mentioned), the Regency found themselves able to provide 8,000 men for embarkation, while leaving 7,000 regulars and the urban militia to hold Cadiz. Graham was ready to join in, with all his troops save the battalion companies of the 2/47th and the 20th Portuguese, and the doubtfully effective German battalion, which were to remain behind, for he did not wish to withdraw the whole British force from Cadiz at once. But he procured the aid of an almost equivalent number of bayonets from an external source: he wrote to General Campbell, com-

[1] *Correspondance*, no. 17,131.

manding at Gibraltar, begging him to spare reinforcements from the garrison of that fortress and of the minor stronghold of Tarifa, at the extreme southern point of Europe, which was then maintained as a sort of dependency of Gibraltar. Campbell eagerly consented to take part in the plan and promised to lend 1,000 infantry. This assistance would bring up the British contingent to 5,000 men. The Spaniards were also to collect some small reinforcements: there was an irregular force under General Beguines operating in the Ronda mountains, and basing itself on Gibraltar. It was ordered to join the expedition when it should come to land, and (as we shall see) actually did so, with a force of three battalions or 1,600 men. The total of the troops whom it was proposed to collect amounted, therefore, to 9,600 Spaniards and 5,000 British, a force almost equal in numbers to Victor's depleted corps. But it was clear that the Marshal would have to leave some sort of a garrison in the Lines before Cadiz, and that the Allies would have a numerical superiority, if they could force on a fight at a distance from the sea and the French base.

One cardinal mistake was made in planning the expedition. Its command was to be entrusted to General Manuel La Peña, then the senior officer in Cadiz, a man with a talent for plausible talking and diplomacy, but one who had already shown himself a selfish colleague and a disloyal subordinate. This was the same man who in 1808, nearly three years back, had sacrificed his chief Castaños at the disastrous battle of Tudela [1], by refusing to march to the sound of the guns, and securing a safe retreat for himself and his 10,000 men, while the main army was being crushed, only four miles away, by Marshal Lannes. Though not personally a coward, he was a shirker of responsibilities, and incapable of a swift and heroic decision. He was ambitious enough to aspire to and intrigue for a post of importance, but collapsed when it became necessary to discharge its duties. He treated Graham in 1811 precisely as he had treated Castaños in 1808, and it was not his fault that the sally from Cadiz failed to end in a disaster [2]. The English lieutenant-general had dis-

[1] See vol. i. pp. 442-3.

[2] Schepeler, the Prussian officer in Spanish service, whose notes on all the Cadiz affairs are so important, owing to his having served through

cretionary authority from his Government to refuse to act in any joint expedition of which he was not given the command. But anxious to bring matters to a head, and deceived by La Peña's mild plausibility, he consented to take the second place, on the ground that the Spaniard contributed the larger body of troops to the enterprise.

If Graham himself had headed the united force, it is certain that the siege of Cadiz would have been raised for the moment, though what would have followed that success no man can say, for it would have brought about such a convulsion in Andalusia, and such a concentration of the French troops, that the whole of the conditions of the war in the south would have been altered. Graham had all the qualities which La Peña lacked—indomitable resolution, swift decision, a good eye for topography, the power of inspiring enthusiastic confidence in his troops. He was no mere professional soldier, but a crusader with a mission; indeed his personal history is one of extraordinary interest. When the French Revolution broke out he was a civilian of mature years, a Whig Member of Parliament, aged forty-four, mainly known as a great sportsman [1] and a bold cross-country rider. Yet certainly if the war of 1793 had not come to pass, he would only be remembered now as the husband of that beautiful Mrs. Graham whose portrait is one of Gainsborough's best-known masterpieces.

Driven to the Riviera in 1792 by the failing health of his wife, who died at Hyères, Graham was an eye-witness of the outbreak of violence and blind rage in France which followed Brunswick's invasion. He himself was arrested—his wife's coffin was torn open by a mob which insisted that he was smuggling 'arms for aristocrats' therein. He narrowly escaped with his life, and returned to England convinced that the French had

them under Blake and La Peña, says that the latter was generally allowed to be incompetent—he was a regular old woman. He tells an illustrative anecdote, of a guerrillero chief who came to concert a bold plan with the general, and went away at once, saying, 'Can I hope to get anything out of an officer who, as I find, is called "Donna Manuela" by every one about him?' Schepeler, *Geschichte der spanischen Monarchie*, i. 134. La Peña had kept his place, despite of his Tudela fiasco, through family and *salon* intrigues—he is said to have been the 'tame cat' of certain great ladies of the patriotic party.

[1] He played in the first recorded cricket match in Scotland in 1785.

Lieutenant-General Thomas Graham

become a nation of wild beasts, *hostes humani generis*. 'I had once deprecated,' he wrote at the time, 'the hostile interference of Britain in the internal affairs of France, but what I have seen in my journey through that country makes me consider that war with her has become just and necessary in self-defence of our constitution[1].' Widowed and childless, he thought it his duty to go to the front at once, despite of his forty-four years and his lack of military training. He devoted all his available funds to the raising, in his own county, of the 90th Foot, the 'Perthshire volunteers,' of which he became the honorary colonel. He could not take command of the corps, because he had no substantive military rank, but he could not keep at home. He went out to the Mediterranean as a sort of volunteer aide-de-camp to Lord Mulgrave, and afterwards, being found useful owing to his gift of languages—he knew not only Italian but German, a rare accomplishment in those days—he was entrusted with a special mission to the Austrian army of Italy. He served through all the disasters of Beaulieu and Würmser, starved in Mantua, and froze in the Tyrolese Alps.

From that time onward we find him wherever there was fighting against the French to be done—in Sicily, Minorca, Malta, Egypt, Portugal. So great were his services that, contrary to all War Office rules, his honorary colonelship was changed to a regular commission on the staff, and in 1808–9 he served first as the British attaché with Castaños's army, and later as one of Sir John Moore's aides-de-camp. In reward for brilliant service in the Corunna campaign he was given in 1810 the command of the British force at Cadiz. And so it came about that this Whig Member of Parliament, who had commenced soldiering at forty-four (like Oliver Cromwell and Julius Caesar), was at sixty-two leading a British division in the field. He had an iron frame[2], and his spirit was as firm as his body—the crusade had to be fought out to the end, though the enemy was now the Corsican Tyrant, not the Atheist Republic against which he had first drawn his sword. It was in keeping with all

[1] See his diary, quoted in Delavoye's *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, p. 32.

[2] Graham survived Barrosa for thirty years, lived to be ninety-six, and after Waterloo founded the United Service Club, as a place of rendezvous for his old Peninsular comrades, who looked upon him as a kind of father.

his previous career that he consented to take the second place in the Tarifa expedition; to get the army started was essential—his personal position counted for nothing with him. Before a month was out he had good reason to regret that he had been so self-denying.

After many tiresome delays[1] the English contingent sailed from Cadiz on February 21st, but met with such fierce west winds, when it neared Cape Trafalgar, that the convoy could not make the difficult harbour of Tarifa, and was blown past it into Gibraltar Bay, where Graham landed on the 23rd at Algesiras. Here he found waiting for him a 'flank battalion' of 536 bayonets, which General Campbell had made up for him out of the six flank companies of the 1/9th, 1/28th, and 2/82nd. From Algesiras the troops marched on the 24th to Tarifa, where they picked up another reinforcement provided by Campbell, the eight battalion companies of the 1/28th, which had been doing garrison duty in that little fortress—460 men in all. Having now just 5,196 men, Graham divided the infantry into two brigades. The first under General Dilkes numbered 1,900 bayonets: it was composed of the two composite battalions of the Guards, together with the flank battalion from Gibraltar and two companies of the 95th Rifles. The second brigade, under Colonel Wheatley, had 2,633 bayonets, and consisted of the 1/28th, 2/67th, 2/87th, and another 'flank battalion' under Colonel Barnard, composed of the two light companies of the 20th Portuguese (the only troops of that nation which served in the expedition), those of the 2/47th, with four more companies of the 95th Rifles. There were only 206 cavalry—two squadrons of the 2nd Hussars of the King's German Legion—and ten guns under Major Duncan.

[1] The delays in the start caused an unexpected conjunction in the mountains of the south. Beguines and his roving brigade, warned to be ready to join in the campaign by the 23rd, came down from the Ronda mountains in search of the army, advanced as far as Medina Sidonia, and skirmished there with Victor's flank guard, two battalions under General Cassagne, which were always kept watching the mountains (March 25). Beaten off, Beguines retired to his usual haunts, and waited for signs of the expedition. His premature attack—premature through no fault of his own—called Victor's attention to his rear, and caused him to fortify Medina Sidonia, and to reinforce Cassagne with three battalions and a cavalry regiment.

The Spanish contingent had sailed three days after Graham, had met with the same rough weather, and had been much beaten about. But the troops began to arrive at Tarifa on the 26th, and were all ashore on the 27th. La Peña assumed command, was all politeness, and made over to Graham two unbrigaded battalions of his own, to bring up the force of the two small British brigades to a higher figure[1]. The rest of his troops were organized in two divisions under Lardizabal and the Prince of Anglona, the first five, the second six battalions strong[2]; he had brought fourteen guns, and four squadrons of horse under an English colonel in the Spanish service, Samuel Whittingham, an officer who did not add to his laurels during this expedition.

On arriving at the bridge of Facinas and the village of Bolonia, ten miles outside Tarifa, La Peña had to make up his mind whether he would march against the rear of the French lines before Cadiz by the track nearer to the coast, which passes through Vejer de la Frontera, Conil, and Chiclana, or by the inland road through the mountains, which runs past Casas Viejas to Medina Sidonia. The two roads at their bifurcation are separated by the long lagoon of La Janda, a very shallow sheet of water, seven miles long, which nearly dries up in summer, but was at this moment full to overflowing from spring rains[3]. To take the inland route across the mountains was by far the better course. The road was not good, but if the Allies could reach Medina Sidonia with their army intact, Victor

[1] These battalions were, I believe, Ciudad Real and 4th Walloon Guards.

[2] As the names of the Spanish battalions engaged in this expedition have never before been collected, it may be worth while to mention here that they were—Lardizabal's division: Campomayor, Carmona, Murcia (2 batts.), Canarias; Anglona's division: Africa (2 batts.), Sigüenza, Cantabria (2 batts.), Voluntarios de Valencia.

[3] I do not know these roads, nor the field of Barrosa, but Colonel Churcher, of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, who is well acquainted with them, tells me that the track (five miles inland from the coast) marked on the British staff map of 1810, from Bolonia to Vejer, is no proper road at all, and unfit for wheeled traffic to this day; while the Tarifa–Medina Sidonia road is bad, but can carry vehicles. He tells me that he has actually crossed the Laguna de la Janda at its centre in dry weather, so shallow does it become.

would be forced to come out and attack them, at a great distance from his Lines. For it would be practically impossible for the Marshal to allow La Peña and Graham to establish themselves at Medina, in the rear of his head quarters, and backed by the Sierra de Jerez, from whose skirts they could send out as many detachments as they pleased, to cut the communication between Seville and the Lines. There was little danger of being taken in the rear by troops sent by the distant Sebastiani, whose nearest forces were at Marbella, eighty miles away, and whose attention was at this moment fully taken up by the local guerrilleros, who had been turned loose on him. Indeed, Sebastiani for some time thought that the expedition was directed against himself, and was preparing to concentrate and take the defensive. The only drawbacks to the Medina Sidonia route were there would be no chance of communicating along it with the garrison of Cadiz, and that the question of provisions might grow serious if the campaign were protracted, for the region was barren and the army ill provided with transport. But a few days would settle the affair—Victor would be compelled to come out at once and fight, with every man that he could bring, and while he was engaged at Medina, there would be nothing to prevent the 7,000 Spaniards in Cadiz from crossing the harbour and destroying the ill-garrisoned Lines. This in itself, even if the Allies failed to hold back the Marshal, would have an immense effect all over Andalusia[1].

La Peña originally intended to take the right-hand road, and ordered Beguines, who was now in the high hills to the east, about Ximena, to join him with his roving brigade at Casas Viejas. The column left Facinas late in the evening, for La Peña had a great and misplaced belief in night marches, by which he always hoped to gain time on the enemy, since his moves could not be discovered or reported till the next morning. He overlooked the corresponding disadvantage of the extreme slowness of progress over bad roads in rugged country, the very real danger that the troops (or some of them) might miss their way in the dark, and the inevitable fatigue to the men from losing their proper hours of sleep. Graham's laconic diary shows how

[1] There is a good note on the pros and cons of the two routes in Schepeler, i. 161.

this worked out. 'Marched in the evening, very tedious from filing across water (the stream which fills the head of the lagoon of La Janda) and other difficulties. Misled by the guides on quitting the Cortigo de la Janda (farm at the head of the lagoon): the counter-march made a most fatiguing night. . . . It was twelve noon before the troops halted, having been nineteen hours under arms.'

The troops of Lardizabal, at the head of the column, had reached Casas Viejas in the morning, but the English division in the rear of the army had got no further than the northern end of the lagoon, some thirteen miles from their starting-place at Puente de Facinas. There was a violent east wind, the night had been very cold, and the men were much fatigued.

Lardizabal on reaching Casas Viejas had found the convent, which was the only solid building there, occupied by a French post, two companies sent out by General Cassagne from Medina Sidonia to watch the high-road. Thinking at first that he was only about to be worried by guerrilleros, the French captain shut himself up behind his barricades, instead of retreating at once. When he found out his mistake, and saw that a whole army was about him, it was too late to get off without loss. La Peña ordered that the convent should be left alone, as he did not wish to waste time in battering and storming it. The whole of his troops had come up, including the roving force of 1,600 men from the hills under Beguines, when the French unwisely made a bolt eastward, in the hope of escaping. The little column was pursued and cut up by a squadron of Busche's German Hussars, many being killed and captured. From the prisoners and Beguines's scouts La Peña learnt that Medina Sidonia was (contrary to his expectation) held by a serious force of French—Cassagne's detachment being now composed of five battalions of infantry, a battery, and a cavalry regiment, about 3,000 men. The walls had been repaired, it was said, and the place was in a state of defence.

The Spanish general should have rejoiced to learn that Victor had sent an appreciable part of his army so far afield—fifteen miles from Chiclana—and by advancing he could have forced the Marshal to come to this distance from his lines in order to support Cassagne. A battle would no doubt have followed—

but it was for a battle that the army had sailed to Tarifa. And by drawing Victor's whole fighting force so far away from Cadiz, La Peña would have given a unique opportunity to the garrison to come out and destroy the siege-works. Meanwhile, if the French lost the battle they would be annihilated, being off their line of retreat; if they won it, they would return to find the greater part of the siege-works destroyed.

But this was not the line of thought that guided La Peña; he was, as his previous record showed, a shirker of responsibilities, and the prospect of a battle on the morrow, or the day after, seems to have paralysed him. To every one's surprise he gave orders that the army, waiting till dusk had come on, should leave the Medina road, and march across country by a bad bridle-path to Vejer, on the other route from Tarifa to Cadiz. Graham protested against a second night march, after the experience of the first, and rightly, for news came in ere night that the road along the north side of the Barbate river, which La Peña had intended to use, was absolutely under water from inundations. La Peña therefore consented to wait till the next morning (March 3rd) and to use another country road, that between the north end of the La Janda lagoon and the river into which it falls. The army marched at 8 o'clock—Lardizabal as before in front, the English division in the rear. But on reaching the intended crossing-place, it was found that this road, like that north of the river, was flooded, the lagoon having overflowed at its northern end, and joined itself in one shallow sheet of water to the Barbate. Graham, on arriving at the passage, found the Spaniards halted at the edge of the flood, and apparently at a nonplus. The energetic old man took the business out of La Peña's hands—he and his staff rode into the water, and sought personally for the track of the submerged causeway, which they fortunately found to be nowhere more than three feet under the surface of the flood. He placed men along the track at intervals, to guide those who should follow, and sat on his horse in the middle of the ford encouraging the troops as they marched past him. 'I set the example of going into the water,' he remarks in his diary, 'which was followed by Lacy, the Prince of Anglona, and others. The passage lasted three hours, and would have taken double that time but for the

exertions made to force the men to keep the files connected.' It was 12 o'clock at night before the army reached Vejer—having taken fifteen hours to cover ten miles, owing to the delays at the inundation. Every one was wet through and much fatigued, for the weather was still very cold.

It remained to be seen what the enemy would make of this move; a squadron of French dragoons had been found in Vejer by the advanced guard, and driven out, so that it was certain that Victor would get prompt news that at any rate some part of the allied army had now appeared on the western road. The Marshal, as a matter of fact, was puzzled. On the night of the 2nd he had heard from Cassagne that the enemy was in force on the Medina Sidonia road, and had cut up the post at Casas Viejas. He accordingly sent orders to Cassagne to bid him stand firm, and promised to support him with his whole disposable force. But before dawn on the 4th he got news, from the dragoons expelled from Vejer, that there was a heavy force on the western road. Had La Peña transferred himself from one route to another, or were the Allies operating in two columns? Cassagne reported a little later that the column opposed to him had advanced no further, but that there were still Spanish troops on the Casas Viejas road; and this was true, for La Peña had left a battalion and some guerrilla horse at that place, to give him news of Cassagne, if the latter should move.

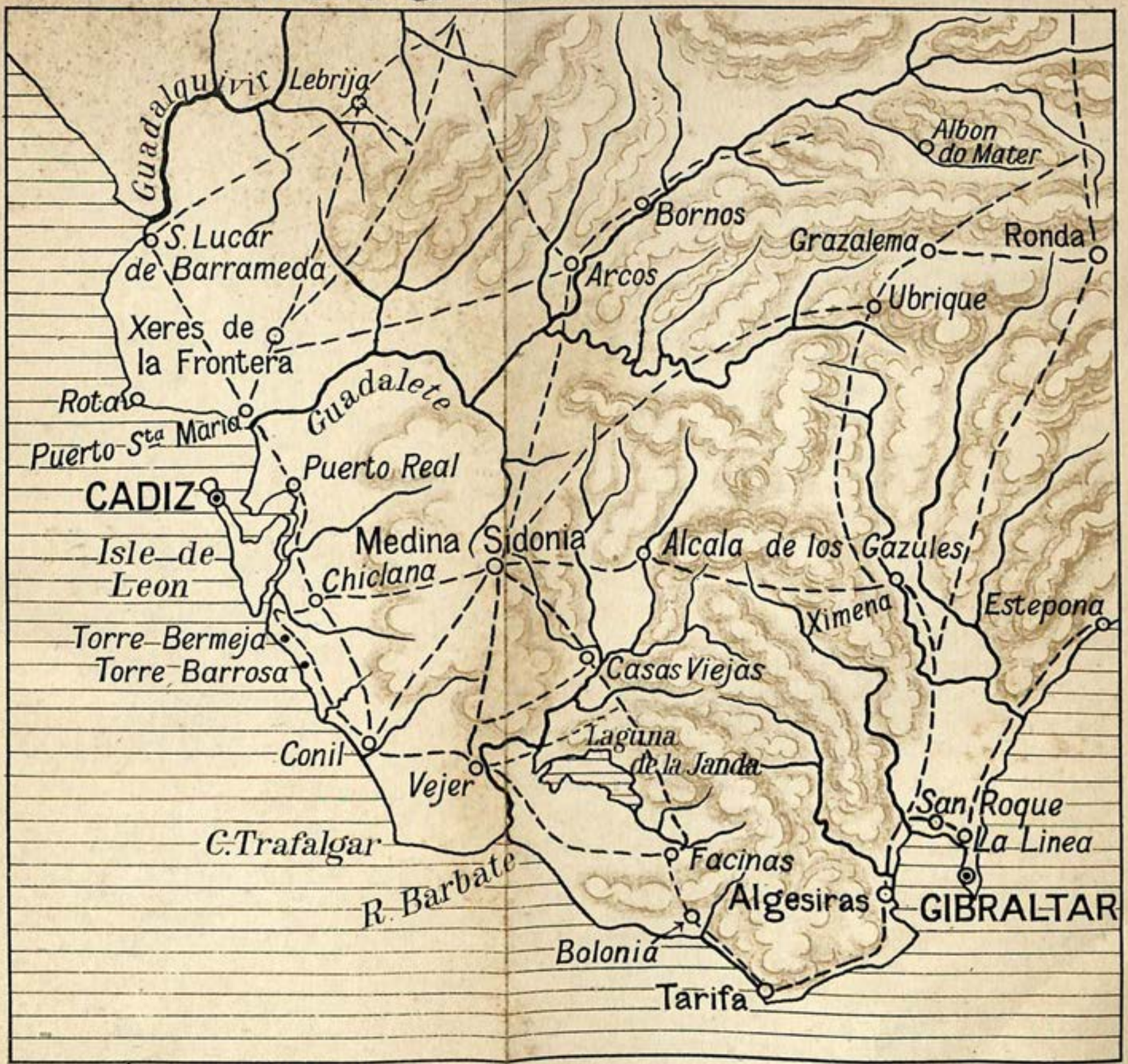
But there was also the garrison of Cadiz to be watched, and it was showing signs of activity. On the night of the 2nd–3rd, when the field army had been lying at Casas Viejas, General Zayas had, in accordance with the scheme of times left with him, thrown his bridge of boats across the Santi Petri creek, and passed a battalion across it, which entrenched itself on the mud-flat, facing the French works that cut off the peninsula of the Bermeja. They threw up a strong *tête-du-pont*, undisturbed, being under the protection of the heavy guns in the castle of Santi Petri, and other batteries on the Isle of Leon. The move could only mean that the garrison of Cadiz intended to come out. Accordingly Victor resolved to stop its egress; waiting for the dusk on the night of the 3rd–4th, he sent six companies of picked *voltigeurs* to storm the *tête-du-pont*. This they accomplished, the heavy guns failing to stop them in the dusk: the

Spanish battalion in the work (Ordenes Militares) was nearly annihilated, losing 13 officers and 300 men killed or taken. But the bridge itself was saved by the prompt sinking of two of its boats, and was hastily floated back to the island, where Zayas laid it up for further use. He had been much chagrined at seeing and hearing nothing of allied forces behind the French, which he had been told to look for on March 3rd[1].

Putting together the movement of Zayas, and the fact that some at least of the allied army was now on the Vejer road, the Marshal came to the correct conclusion that the army in the field was intending to get into communication with Cadiz and its garrison. Accordingly he made a new plan to suit this hypothesis: of his three divisions one, that of Villatte, was to block the neck of the peninsula along which the track from Vejer and Conil leads to the Santi Petri creek and the Isle of Leon. The other two, concentrated at Chiclana, were to wait till the allied force had found itself blocked in front by Villatte, and then to fall upon its flank, in the space of three miles that lies between the hill of Barrosa and the position where Villatte had been posted. This plan would place the intercepting division in obvious danger, since, while attacked in front by the head of the allied army, it might find Zayas attempting once more to lay his bridge, and to take it in the rear. Such a movement by the garrison could not be stopped, because the end of the peninsula, by the bridge-place, was under the guns of several heavy batteries. But Victor directed Villatte not to fight to the last, but to be contented with holding the Allies in check long enough to enable the main body to fall on their flank. The sound of his guns would be the signal for the two striking divisions to move out from the wood of Chiclana, and dash at the long column whose head would be engaged with Villatte, while its tail would still be coming along the coast many miles to the rear. For 14,000 men had only the single line of communication along which to move.

[1] According to Schepeler La Peña had sent an officer out from Tarifa in a fishing-boat on the 1st March, to let the garrison of Cadiz know that he might not keep his time accurately; this messenger was stopped at sea by an English brig, and since he was disguised and had no English pass, he was detained some time as a suspicious character, and only reached Cadiz on the 4th.

THE BARROSA CAMPAIGN



B.V. Darbishire, Oxford, 1911.

Engl. Miles 10 0 10 20

Meanwhile Cassagne, at Medina Sidonia, was sent orders to find out exactly what was in front of him, and if there was no solid force, to march to join the main body on the morning of the 5th. He must have received the order to do so somewhere in the afternoon of the 4th.

Victor's force was not so large as he would have wished. Soult had taken from him six battalions of infantry and three cavalry regiments, reducing the total of the 1st Corps left at or near Cadiz to twenty-three battalions of infantry, three regiments of cavalry, and four or five field batteries, about 15,000 men in all. There were also present in the lines 3,500 men more not belonging to the corps, viz. about 1,000 artillery and 800 engineers and sappers belonging to the siege train, and 1,600 marine troops from the flotilla which had been constructed in Cadiz bay. These of course were useless for field operations; but they served to man the lines, with the addition of three battalions—2,000 men—from the fighting force, the least that Victor thought he could spare. For the garrison of Cadiz and the English fleet might attack in force any point of the Lines during the absence of the main body. This left 13,000 men available for field operations: but Cassagne was still absent at Medina Sidonia, with five battalions, a battery, and one of the three cavalry regiments, making 3,100 men in all. There were therefore only 10,000 men left to face La Peña and Graham, till Cassagne should come up. Victor, according to his own dispatch, much over-estimated the force of the Allies, which he states as 8,000 English and 18,000 Spaniards, so that he went to work in rather a desperate mood, thinking that he had to fight very superior numbers, and that his only chance was to make a sudden and resolute attack when he was not expected. As a matter of fact he overstated the enemy by nearly a half, since there were really marching from Vejer only 5,000 English and under 10,000 Spaniards altogether, and no help could come to them from Cadiz till Villatte should be driven off.

Each of the three divisions which Victor had under his hand was short of several battalions; Ruffin's, the 1st Division, and Leval's, the 2nd, had each a battalion in the Lines and another detached with Cassagne at Medina. Villatte's, the 3rd, had one in the Lines and three with Cassagne. Hence they took the

field, Ruffin and Leval with six battalions each, Villatte with five only. The respective forces were 3,000, 3,800, and 2,500 bayonets[1]: each unit had its divisional battery with it. Of the two cavalry regiments, the 1st Dragoons, 400 sabres, was with Ruffin, the 2nd Dragoons, 300 sabres, with Villatte. On the evening of the 4th Ruffin's and Leval's men were concentrated at Chiclana, hidden behind the woods which cover it; Villatte was on the ridge of the Torre Bermeja, between the Almanza creek and the sea, right across the track leading from Vejer to Cadiz, and looking both backward and forward, with his attention ready for Zayas as much as for La Peña.

Meanwhile the Allies were marching straight into the middle of the trap which Victor had prepared for them. After passing Conil, the road on which their army was moving turns inland towards Chiclana, while a mere track follows the beach towards the Santi Petri. It was along this that La Peña was intending to move. But in the dark the head of the column followed the main road, and went several miles along it. At dawn the error was discovered, and the army, cutting across an open heath, got down to the beach[2].

The point which the allies had now reached was a mile or so south-east of the coast-guard tower of Barrosa, where an isolated eminence called the Cerro del Puerco (Boar's Hill), crowned by a ruined chapel, looks out upon the heathy plain of Chiclana to the north, and a scrubby pine wood (covering much of the ground towards the beach) to the west[3]. The advanced cavalry got upon the hill unhindered soon after daybreak, and met no enemy, nor did patrols sent into the wood discover him for some time. Presently, however, news came back from the front

[1] It chanced that the battalions in Leval's division were individually stronger than those in the others—averaging 640 men each, against little over 500 in Villatte's and Ruffin's divisions—officers not counted. The brigading was—Ruffin, 1/9th Léger, 1/96th Ligne, 1 and 2/24th Ligne, 2 Provisional battalions of grenadiers. Leval 1 and 2/8th Ligne, 1 and 2/54th Ligne, 1/45th, 1 Provisional battalion of grenadiers. See Appendix at end of volume giving exact strength.

[2] See Graham's diary, p. 465.

[3] The pinewood is now much shrunken, and covers only the northern part of its original breadth. See an article on the topography of Barrosa by Colonel Verner in the *Saturday Review* for March 9, 1911.

that a French force had been discerned, drawn up between the Almanza creek and the sea, and blocking the way to Cadiz. Being outside the wood it was very visible, and seemed to be about a strong brigade of infantry with a squadron or two of horse. This was, of course, Villatte, waiting for the advance of the Allies. No other hostile troops were to be seen.

La Peña now told Graham that, despite of the fact that the men had been under arms for fourteen hours, and had marched as many miles in the dark, he was about to thrust this French force out of the way without a moment's delay. Lardizabal, with the vanguard division, was to attack it at once, while the rest of the army took up a position to cover him from any possible movement of the enemy from the direction of Chiclana.

About nine in the morning Lardizabal with his five battalions reached Villatte's front, deployed and attacked him. The forces were about equal, and the attack was repulsed with some loss; La Peña then ordered up the leading brigade of Anglona's division to support the vanguard. A sharp engagement was going on, when a new fire broke out behind Villatte. Zayas, from the Isle of Leon, had recast his bridge across the Santi Petri, and was advancing to take the French in the rear. Villatte saw his danger, gave up his position across the peninsula, and hastily fell back towards the passage of the shallow Almanza creek, near the mill of the same name. He recrossed it, not without some difficulty, and then drew up to defend the passage. Lardizabal was prevented by La Peña from pursuing him, and halted opposite. The skirmish had been hot: Villatte had lost 337 men, the Spaniards a few more. But they had achieved their purpose, and the connexion with Cadiz had been duly established.

About noon La Peña sent orders to Graham to evacuate the Barrosa position, and draw in closer to the Almanza creek, to join the rest of the army. Meanwhile he would be relieved on the hill by five battalions of Cruz Murgeon and Beguines [1], to which rearguard there was added one British battalion, Browne's composite unit consisting of the six flank companies of the 9th,

[1] Cruz Murgeon was commanding the two battalions attached to the British division, Ciudad Real and 4th Walloon Guards.

28th, and 82nd. Whittingham and the cavalry were to flank this force on the coast track, somewhere near the tower of La Barrosa. This force was to move off in its turn, when Graham should have reached the main body, for the Spanish general had resolved not to hold the Cerro, considering that an army of 14,000 men should not be spread out over four miles of ground, but be kept more concentrated. Graham entirely disagreed with this movement; if the Allies came down and crammed themselves into the narrow peninsula between the sea and the Almanza creek, there was nothing to prevent Victor from seizing the Barrosa heights, and placing himself across their front, in a way which would block them into the cramped position which they had assumed. The move practically threw them back on Cadiz, and sacrificed all the results of the toilsome flank march in which they had been so long engaged. Graham had in the morning urged on La Peña the all-importance of retaining the hill, but now saw his advice rejected. Obeying orders, however, he set his column in march towards the Torre Bermeja and the Almanza creek, through the pine wood. At the same time the rearguard under Beguines and Cruz Murgeon ascended the Cerro, and took up the post which the British division had left.

The British column did not descend to the rough track along the coast, but used a fair wood path right through the middle of the pine forest, which saved them a couple of miles of détour, and was practicable for artillery. They were soon filing along between the pines, lost to sight, and themselves unable to see a hundred yards in any direction.

At this moment, about 12.30 p.m., Victor suddenly broke out of the woods in front of Chiclana with the 7,000 men of Ruffin's and Leval's divisions. He was tired of waiting for Cassagne, for he had now got news that the force at Medina had started late in the morning, instead of at dawn, and would not be up for two or three hours more. His cavalry had just reported to him that the Cerro seemed to be abandoned, and that the troops formerly holding it were marching across his front through the forest. Since the main body of the enemy had been located opposite Villatte, on the Almanza creek, there seemed to be a good chance of seizing the important Barrosa position unopposed, and of striking the rear division of the Allies while it was defiling,

strung out helplessly in a wood road, across the front of the advancing French. The orders given by the Marshal sent his cavalry regiment (three squadrons of the 1st Dragoons) to turn the heights by their south-eastern flank, and seize the coast track, while Ruffin ascended the Cerro by its gently sloping northern front, and Leval struck at the troops known to be in the wood. The French, being quite fresh, came on at a great pace; the Marshal had explained to his subordinates that haste was everything. They were clearly visible to the rearguard left on the heights, partly visible to La Peña, who could see their flank up the trough of the Almanza creek, but wholly invisible to Graham and his troops in the wood.

A great responsibility now fell on the Spanish officers on the Cerro; they were under orders to evacuate the heights when Graham should have got away westward. What were they to do when it suddenly became clear that they were themselves about to be attacked? They might attempt to defend the hill with the one British and five Spanish battalions which lay, unseen to the French, under the seaward slope of the Cerro: or they might simply obey orders, and retire towards the main body, abandoning their dominating position. The latter course was the one taken. The five Spanish battalions streamed down the seaward face of the hill in no very good order, and fell in there with the baggage of the whole army. All together began to retire northward; there was a block on the beach, the baggage mules were driven right and left, and many got loose and bolted. Meanwhile Whittingham with the cavalry (three Spanish[1] and two K.G.L. squadrons) ranged himself across the track, where he was soon faced by the French dragoons, who had galloped round the south-eastern face of the heights with remarkable celerity.

Whittingham's retreat was not made without a protest against it by Colonel Browne, who urged, firstly, that it was madness to abandon the height, secondly that he had Graham's orders to stand there, and could obey no others. The cavalry general replied that, for his part, he had resolved to retire, and offered to lend Browne one of his squadrons to cover his retreat towards

[1] The rest of the Spanish cavalry being now with La Peña by the Almanza creek.

the British division, if he would not follow him to the coast track. The fiery colonel made no reply, but turned to his battalion and ordered it to occupy the ruined chapel on the top of the Cerro and the neighbouring thickets, and to prepare for action. But in half an hour, seeing Whittingham's column far off at the foot of the hill, and six French battalions coming in upon him, Browne gave way and descended into the pine wood in search of Graham [1]. The French—Ruffin's division—took possession of the heights, and planted a battery upon them.

Meanwhile we must return to Graham, concealed in the wood, and marching (as it were blindfold) across the front of Leval's approaching column. He had no cavalry with him, but presently two mounted guerrilleros rode up in haste, and told him that the French were close on his flank. Riding back to the rear of his division, he saw from the edge of the forest Beguines's troops pouring down the near side of the Cerro, and Ruffin's mounting its northern ascent. Leval was also visible to the left.

Graham's mind was made up in a moment: 'A retreat in the face of the enemy,' he writes, 'who was already in reach of the easy communication by the sea-beach, must have involved the whole allied army in the danger of being attacked during the unavoidable confusion, while the different corps would be arriving on the narrow ridge of Bermeja at the same time,' i. e. he saw that he himself coming out of the wood, Whittingham and Beguines from the shore track, and the main body returning from the Almanza creek bridge, would meet in disorder on the narrow neck of the peninsula by the Torre Bermeja, and would be unable to form an orderly line of battle. Even if they did, and then held their ground, the object of the whole expedition was lost, and the French, in possession of the Cerro del Puerco, once more blocked the army into Cadiz.

The alternative was to take the offensive before the two French columns had united, and to attack them while they were still coming upon the ground, and before they had drawn up in any regular order. It was evident that they were hurrying forward without any notion that they were liable to be thrown

[1] There is a lively account of the altercation in the memoirs of Browne's ardent admirer Blakeney (*A Boy in the Peninsular War*, p. 187).

on the defensive at a moment's notice. In three minutes Graham had made up his mind to attack himself, instead of allowing himself to be chased into the Bermeja position. The wood, in which his division lay concealed, enabled him to hide his movement, though it made that movement perilously disorderly. The orders given were simple: the leading brigade, that of Colonel Wheatley, was to push straight through the wood till it reached the northern edge, and then form there, and attack Leval. The rear brigade, that of General Dilkes, was to countermarch down the wood-path on which it was engaged, till it too cleared the wood, and then to form up and attack Ruffin on the slopes of the Cerro del Puerco. The ten guns, in the centre of the marching column, were to push up a side track which seemed passable, and to form on Wheatley's right, in the centre between the two brigades. Meanwhile these movements would take some time to execute, and the French were coming closer to the wood every minute. It was necessary to hold them back at all costs till a line could be formed. With this object Graham resolved to throw forward on each front a light infantry force, which should engage the enemy, regardless of order and of losses, till the main body got up. On the left Barnard's four companies of the 95th Rifles and the two companies of the 20th Portuguese under Colonel Bushe, about 700 men in all, were ordered to break through the wood directly before them, without any attempt at formation, and when they reached its edge, to sally straight out at Leval's front, in the best skirmishing line they could make. On the right there was a force already to the front—Browne's flank battalion, 536 muskets, which had just descended unwillingly from the Cerro, and was visible at its foot.

This last force was near Graham as he sat on his horse among the trees at the wood's end. He cantered up to Browne, and asked him why the Cerro had been abandoned. 'Because five battalions of Spaniards went off before the enemy came within cannon-shot,' was the reply. 'Well, it's a bad business, Browne; you must instantly turn round again and attack.' The flank battalion began to extend into skirmishing order, when Graham, after a moment's reflection, said, 'I must show something more serious than skirmishing. Close the men into

compact battalion! And then attack in your front and immediately.' Dilkes's brigade was coming up, but was still a mile away in the wood, and Browne came out of the trees into the open absolutely isolated, to attack uphill six battalions and a battery with a two-deep line of just 536 men[1]. Blakeney says that his colonel rode into action singing the old naval song—

'Now cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we steer,'

a tune to which he was much addicted at all times in and out of season.

About the same time, or a few minutes later, Barnard's and Bushe's scattered and uneven line burst out of the northern edge of the wood a mile away, and found themselves facing Leval's division at the distance of only some 400 yards. This force, quite unaware that any enemy was yet near, was advancing in two columns each of three battalions, the right one composed of the 54th regiment and a battalion of *grenadiers réunis*, the left of the 8th regiment followed by a single battalion of the 45th. Their divisional battery was following on their left rear. Barnard, who got a little further to the front than the Portuguese, was facing the French 54th, Bushe, who was drawn back a little in echelon, was opposite the French 8th. They had hardly opened their fire, which had great effect because the enemy had no screen of voltigeurs out to cover him, and was caught unprepared for an infantry fight, when Duncan's ten guns, which had made extraordinary good pace through the wood, appeared, and unlimbering at its edge began to fire shrapnel into the leading battalions of the French. Behind them the two companies of the 47th, which properly belonged to Barnard's provisional battalion, took post as their supports.

Thus the battle was suddenly begun on both fronts, but Graham had only 500 men up on one side, and 900 with the guns on the other. The main body was coming on through the wood behind in an extraordinarily mixed order. When Graham gave orders to Wheatley's brigade to face to their right flank and push through the wood northward, and to Dilkes's brigade to turn about on the road and return to the

[1] All this from the graphic description in the autobiography of Blakeney, Browne's adjutant, p. 188.

Cerro by the way they had come, there was no small confusion. By some misunderstanding the rear companies of the 67th, which was the last battalion in Wheatley's brigade, faced about and followed Dilkes, though the leading companies went off with their proper companions, the 28th and 87th. On the other hand, by a compensating mistake, the two companies of the Coldstream Guards, which belonged to Dilkes, turned north into the wood and followed Wheatley[1]. The brigades exchanged, as it were, 250 men with each other. In addition the battalions, owing to the sudden inversion of their column of march, were all out of their proper order in their brigades, and went into action 'almost anyhow.'

But while a line of some sort was being formed, the screen of light troops which Graham had thrown forward, to detain the enemy, during the deployment of the main body, had done its duty by allowing itself to be knocked to pieces while attacking fivefold numbers. It had to be sacrificed to gain time, and carried out its orders completely. We will take the fortunes of the right-hand force first.

Browne's composite battalion had started from a position close under the edge of the pine wood; it had first to cross a broad but shallow ravine, and then to climb the gentle slope of the Cerro, where it became fully visible to the enemy, though there was a little cover here and there upon the hillside, in the form of scattered bushes and slight dips in the ground. The French allowed the line to advance a little way up the ascent, and then opened upon it both with a field battery placed close to the chapel on the summit, and with the musketry fire of the three battalions which formed their right wing. Blakeney,

[1] The biography of General Dilkes seems to explain this matter. Duncan, the artillery commander, thought that he would be going into action without any infantry supports, and rode to the nearest brigadier—this was Dilkes—to ask him to lend a few companies to cover the guns. Dilkes assented, and told the Coldstream companies in the middle of his column to fall out and follow the guns. But Graham had already set aside the two companies of the 47th, from Barnard's battalion, for the same purpose. When Duncan found them waiting for him in the edge of the wood, he told the officer commanding the Coldstreamers that he was not wanted, and these two companies marched off and fell into line in a gap in the front of Wheatley's brigade.

our ever-useful authority for this side of the battle, says that the first salvo of the French knocked over more than 200 officers and men out of 536 forming the line. Browne ordered the men to close to the centre, and endeavoured to continue his climb; this was done with much difficulty, but, before the advance could be resumed, more than fifty men more were killed or wounded. All the exertions of the colonel could not form a third line—fourteen officers out of twenty-one were down, and more than half the rank and file. The remainder now scattered; the men did not retreat, but threw themselves down, and commenced independent firing from behind bushes, hillocks, and any other cover they could find. The French made no attempt to fall upon them by descending the hill, as would have seemed natural. The reason was that by the time that the flank battalion had been disposed of, the main body of Dilkes's brigade had come out of the wood, and was visible forming up at the foot of the hill to deliver the real assault.

The Guards had obtained the necessary time to come up and choose their ground through the absolute martyrdom of the flank battalion. Dilkes did not repeat the attack on the same slope over which Browne had advanced, but pushed some distance to the right, where the hillside showed more cover in the way of scattered bushes and trees, and some dead ground hid the men by its steepness from the fire of the battery on the crest above. Blakeney describes them as strung out on a most irregular front, a confused mass rather than a formed line. The whole, while advancing, kept taking ground to their right, so as to come up the hillside opposite Ruffin's left wing. Their extreme flank was covered by Norcott's two companies of rifles in more extended order. Partly owing to the cover, partly to the difficulty found by the French guns in getting their fire to bear, Dilkes's brigade got wellnigh to the top of the hill before it suffered any very serious losses. But on clearing the last underwood, and reaching smooth ground, it was charged by the four battalions of Ruffin's left—two of the 24th Line supported by the two reserve battalions of *grenadiers réunis*. This was the crisis of the battle in the southern half of its progress. By all the rules of French military art four battalion columns, fresh and well ordered, charging down hill, should have

been able to break through a disordered line of decidedly inferior strength pushing upwards against them. Dilkes had only 1,400 men, the four French battalions just over 2,000. Nevertheless, the impossible happened. When the two columns of the 24th Ligne came down, with drums beating and levelled bayonets, against the centre of the firm, if disorderly, line in front, they were checked by the furious fire that broke out against them from the semicircle into which they had pushed. This was one more example of the fact established at Maida five years before, and reaffirmed at Vimiero, Talavera, and Bussaco, that no column could break the British line by mere impetus. In this case the French had every advantage, since they were absolutely intact troops, and had the ground entirely in their favour, while the Guards and the wing of the 67th opposed to them had marched two miles in haste, had then climbed a steep 200-foot slope under fire, had lost their order, and were firing up hill. But the fire was delivered with astounding accuracy, considering that the men were blown with their climb and dreadfully exhausted. The whole head of each of the descending columns was blown to pieces. The rest came to a standstill, and crowding together in a disorderly clump, opened an irregular fire against the British line.

The Marshal, who was present in person on the top of the Cerro, then brought up his reserve, the two battalions of grenadiers under General Chaudron Rousseau. He himself and the brigadier were both distinctly seen leading on the column, the Marshal waving his large white-plumed hat over his head. This charge was delivered against the right of Dilkes's line, where the 3rd Guards and wing of the 67th lay, that of the 24th Ligne had been more against the centre and the 1st Guards. But the result was the same, though the contest was more long and bloody. The grenadiers are said to have struggled forward, losing heavily at each step, till their front was within a very few yards of Dilkes's line: it was only then that they halted and began to fire—a fatal step in such a contest, where impetus was the sole chance of the attacking mass, and superiority in musketry fire (owing to the longer front) was on the side of the English line. This of course was a terribly murderous business to both sides, as the figures presently to be quoted will show. But as in

all similar contests during the Peninsular War, the line hit harder than the column. The four French battalions began at last to give way, and could not be kept together. Then Victor tried to bring in the two left battalions of his line to their aid, but these two units were pestered and impeded, when they began to move off from their first position, by the remains of Browne's flank battalion, which (though reduced to under 300 muskets) began to press forward again, when the troops hitherto in their front commenced to move off to the right. 'They darted from behind trees, briars, brakes, and out of hollows,' says Blakeney. 'I could imagine myself like Roderick Dhu upon Benledi's side—it was a magic effect. We confidently advanced up the hill and, unlike most advances, in this one our numbers increased as we proceeded, soldiers of the flank battalion joining at every step.' This scattered little force hung on to the flank of Victor's right, and prevented it from rallying the broken force now recoiling from in front of Dilkes. The flankers had even the good fortune to capture a howitzer from the left of Victor's battery placed by the chapel on the hill-top; another gun was taken by the 1st Guards in their forward progress.

It must have been just at this crisis that the whole French mass broke; up to this moment it had been recoiling sullenly, still keeping up some fire from its rear. But now the observer saw[1], 'with loud and murmuring sounds, Ruffin's division and Rousseau's chosen grenadiers rolling with a whirling motion down into the valley below, leaving their two brave generals mortally wounded on the hill, which was left in possession of their bloodstained conquerors.'

The exhausted victors halted for a short time to re-form, and were in a more orderly line than they had hitherto shown when they commenced to follow the enemy down the slope. The casualties in this part of the field may now be stated, for neither party was to lose many more men in the last episode of the fight. Dilkes's brigade and Browne's flank battalion had gone up the hill with 76 officers and 1,873 men. They lost 25 officers and 588 men—about 10 men out of every 31 in the fight. The French loss was positively more, proportionately not quite so great. In the six battalions of Ruffin and Chaudron Rousseau

[1] Blakeney, p. 195.

there seem to have been about 108 officers and 3,000 men present; of these 36 officers and 840 men were left on the hill, i. e. 10 men in every 35. The trophies remaining with the victors were two guns and 107 unwounded prisoners, beside the multitude of disabled men left on the slope[1].

While this bloody business had been going on upon the Cerro del Puerco, it may be asked what were the Spaniards on the coast road doing—Whittingham's squadrons and the five battalions of Cruz Murgeon and Beguines. The last named, with his three battalions, shepherding what was left of the baggage-train, quietly marched off along the sea, and joined La Peña by the Torre Bermeja. Whittingham was of a little positive use; he continued all through the fight to 'contain' and occasionally to bicker with the French cavalry regiment (1st Dragoons) that faced him near the Torre Barrosa. The two battalions of Cruz Murgeon supported him. This force certainly did not do its share—180 German Hussars, 300 Spanish horse, and 1,000 Spanish foot simply kept out of action 400 French horse. This was something, but not much, for the dragoons could not have interfered very effectively on the hill against Dilkes's advance, because the south side of the Cerro is too precipitous for horsemen. In short, Whittingham's statement in his report to La Peña, that 'all the cavalry fulfilled its duty brilliantly' is a sad overstatement of the case.

Let us turn now to the other half of the fight, where Wheatley's brigade and Duncan's guns were facing Leval on the open plain just outside the edge of the wood. At the moment when Browne attacked the Cerro, Barnard's rifles and Bushe's Portuguese were throwing themselves in a no less resolute fashion upon the six French battalions in their front. They had the advantage of being invisible to the enemy till they emerged from the wood, only 300 yards in his front, and of being supported, within a few minutes of their arrival, by Duncan's ten guns, while Browne had no artillery assistance whatever, and was seen by the French for half a mile before he got near them.

The confusion in Leval's division on being suddenly attacked

[1] For further details see the letters of General Dilkes, Colonels Norcott, Stanhope, and Onslow, and Major Acheson, in Wellington's *Supplementary Dispatches*, vii. pp. 127–31.

by an unexpected swarm of skirmishers pouring out of the wood was extreme. So much were they taken aback, that Vigo-Roussillon of the 8th Line assures us in his memoirs that a false alarm of cavalry was raised, and that his regiment, and the first battalion of the 54th, formed square before the mistake was recognized, and caught some shells from Duncan's guns in that uncomfortable situation, before they had time to deploy for action against infantry. This they had to do under a heavy fire from Barnard's riflemen, who had advanced quite close to them. Leval's fighting formation was the usual 'column of divisions,' i.e. a front of two companies and a depth of three in each battalion, or (since these units averaged 650 men each, and the companies over 100 bayonets) a front of seventy-two men and a depth of nine. The length of Barnard's skirmishing line, with his 400 rifles, seems to have covered the front of the right battalion of the 54th and the left battalion of the 8th—some 1,300 men. The 95th did considerable execution on them while they were getting out of square formation: but when the columns advanced firing, the skirmishing line had to fall back. Its loss was heavy—sixty-five killed and wounded; among the latter Barnard, commanding the battalion. The next troops whom the French encountered were the flank companies of the 20th Portuguese—330 men only, who had advanced on the right rear of the 95th, supporting them in échelon. This was a new corps, which had been sent to Cadiz the moment it was raised in 1809, and had never been under fire before. Considering their hopeless position, alone in front of an advancing division, the Portuguese behaved very well; they held their ground for some time, while their colonel, Bushe, as is recorded by an eye-witness, rode slowly backward and forward behind them with his spectacles on, crying as the balls whistled past, 'Que bella musica,' to encourage his men. But he was soon mortally wounded [1], and after his fall the line melted away and

[1] Vigo-Roussillon says that he personally captured Colonel Bushe, who was riding away slowly from the front, disabled by a wound. This seems contradicted by the very circumstantial evidence of Bunbury, adjutant of the 20th Portuguese, who says that Bushe had his horse shot under him, and was mortally wounded, that he declined being sent to the rear, and was propped up and left behind by his own orders. French soldiers were seen rifling him as he lay.

drifted to the rear, after having kept a battalion of the French 8th engaged for some minutes: proportionately its loss was much the same as that of the Rifles—56 killed and wounded out of 332 present—one man in six.

The first act of the drama on this front was thus complete; the detaining force sent out by Graham had been, as he expected, driven in with loss, though not an appalling loss of 50 per cent., such as Browne's gallant flankers had suffered on the Cerro. But the main body was now up, and had formed in the edge of the wood, to the left of Duncan's guns, with no loss or interruption, since it had been well covered all the time. There were now some 1,400 men in line: the 28th, 450 strong, on the left, then the 211 bayonets of the Coldstreamers, the 87th, nearly 700 strong, in the centre; beyond them the right wing of the 67th, about 250 bayonets, next to the guns, which were still under the protection of the flank companies of the 47th which served as their escort throughout the fight. The broken screen of light troops which had just retired was by no means out of action; the 95th formed up again behind the 28th, the Portuguese behind the 87th, and both were used again before the battle was over.

The formation of the French at this moment was an uneven line of four battalion columns,—counting from their left, 1/8th, 2/8th, 2/54th, 1/54th; the other two battalions were in reserve, the 1/45th behind the French battery, which was now engaged with Duncan's guns, the provisional battalion of grenadiers more to the right, and some distance behind the 54th regiment. The whole was advancing, but slowly: the battalions in the front line were firing; the centre was a little more to the front than the wings, the 2/8th being ahead of the other battalions because (as its *chef de bataillon* remarks in his memoir) he only allowed his men to fire volleys by order, while the units on his right and left were using independent fire. All had suffered in the previous fight with Barnard and the Portuguese, and much needed time to re-form, which was not granted them, because the English main line charged the moment that the light troops had cleared off from its front. It is curious to note in the French memoirs that the authors all write as if they had an oppressive feeling that the superiority of numbers was against them, and that they were being led to a forlorn hope. This was caused partly by the

immense extent of the British line in proportion to its depth, still more by the happy existence of the wood behind Wheatley's brigade. It had already vomited out two lively attacking lines, and the enemy presupposed a third in reserve; nearly all the French narratives definitely say that they were attacked by three lines, while really there was only one, with the screen of light troops, which had already been used up. As to the complaint concerning inferior numbers, it is certain that Leval's division had 3,800 men, and Wheatley's brigade only 2,500. The only superiority of the British was that, in the artillery duel now going on to the right of the line, they had ten guns to six, and soon crushed the French battery, so that it gave no effective support to its infantry. Only one of the French battalions attempted to deploy into line—this was the 2nd of the 54th, which lay opposite the British 28th—the others kept on from first to last in column of divisions. An eye-witness (Surtees of the 95th) remarks, 'they never got into line, nor did they ever intend to do so, I believe, but advanced in solid bodies, firing from their front[1].'

The fight, owing to the French centre being slightly advanced, began a little earlier there than on the wings, the first clash being between the column of the French 2/8th, led by Vigo-Roussillon, and the line of the 2/87th, led by that enthusiastic fighter, Major Gough. We have narratives from both of them, and each insists that he kept down the fire of his men till they were within a very short distance of the enemy—sixty yards, says Vigo-Roussillon, twenty-five, says Gough. There was then a single volley exchanged, and the French column, much the harder hit of the two, broke up. 'As they were in column when they broke,' says Gough, 'they could not get away. It was therefore a scene of most dreadful carnage, and I must own my weakness; as I was in front of the regiment I was in the very middle of them, and I could not cut down one, though I might have twenty, they seemed so confounded and confused[2].' There was indeed a fearful crowding and *mêlée* here, for the 1st battalion of the French 8th, yielding before the fire of the British guns and the troops to the right of Gough, the wing of the 67th, fell

[1] Surtees, *Twenty Years in the Rifle Brigade*, p. 119.

[2] See letter in Rait's *Life of Lord Gough*, vol. i. p. 53.

back sideways against their own second battalion, and became mixed in one mass with them. Thus the 87th were sweeping before them, and ploughing through, a crowd of some 1,400, or allowing for previous losses, 1,200 men, while the companies of the 67th were firing into its flank and rear. The 8th Ligne suffered worse losses than any other troops on the field that day, save Browne's heroic flank battalion, losing about 50 per cent. of the men who went into action—726 killed, wounded, and taken out of 1,468 present. The colonel, Autié, was killed, and one of the two battalion chiefs, Lanusse, while the other, Vigo-Roussillon, was wounded and taken prisoner. The eagle was captured from the middle of the 1st battalion after a desperate struggle with the colours-guard; Ensign Keogh of the 87th, who first got hold of it, was bayonetted twice and killed; Sergeant Masterson[1] then ran the *aquilifère* through with his pike, dragged the eagle away, and kept it during the rest of the *mêlée*. This was the first eagle captured by the British during the Peninsular War, and its arrival in London was rightly made an occasion of considerable pomp and ceremony. The eagle was presented to the Prince Regent in person, who granted to the 87th the right to bear an eagle and a laurel wreath above the harp on the regimental colours and appointments, and the title of the 'Prince of Wales's Own Irish Regiment.' Gough was given a brevet lieutenant-colonelcy at once, and Sergeant Masterson, who had captured the eagle, received a commission in his own regiment; he and his descendants have served in it almost throughout the nineteenth century.

The rout of the 8th Ligne was not the last triumph of the 87th on that day; driving the remains of that unfortunate corps in front of them, they came upon the battalion of the 45th Ligne, which had hitherto been standing in reserve behind the French battery, and which Leval had just ordered up to support the broken first line. Gough, with the greatest difficulty, succeeded in forming about half his scattered though victorious regiment to face this new enemy. But there was hardly a collision: all the other French units were broken by this time, and the 45th hesitated. 'After firing until we came within about

[1] A hereditary name of glory in the 87th. The present representative of the family won his Victoria Cross at Ladysmith in 1900.

fifty paces of them,' writes Gough, 'they (for us fortunately) broke and fled, for had they done their duty, fatigued as my men were at the moment, they might have cut us to pieces.' That this battalion cannot have behaved well is sufficiently shown by the casualty list—out of 700 men present it only lost 55—far the smallest proportional loss in the whole French army that day. Probably the weakness of its resistance is partly to be accounted for by the fact that it was being outflanked by the wing of the 67th, who must have been extending in this direction at the moment, prolonging the line of the 87th eastward. In its double victory the 87th lost 173 men out of 700 in the field. There remains the left wing of this fight to be dealt with. Here the French 54th, in two battalion columns, was facing the British 1/28th and the 200 Coldstreamers on their right. This was the only part of the field in which the French tried at all to manœuvre: the right battalion of the 54th began to deploy and to turn the British flank, by moving westward into the edge of the pine wood, but with little effect. We have a short account of this fight in the memoirs of Cadell of the 28th.

'We had formed line under cover of the 95th, and then advanced to meet their right wing, which was coming down in close column—a great advantage—and here the coolness of Colonel Belson was conspicuous: he moved us up without firing a shot, close to their right battalion, which just then began to deploy. The Colonel then gave orders to fire by platoons from centre to flanks, and low; "Fire at their legs and spoil their dancing." This was kept up for a short time, with dreadful effect. The action being now general all along the line, we twice attempted to charge. But the enemy, being double our strength (since our flank companies were away), only retired a little on each occasion. Finally, giving three cheers, we charged a third time, and succeeded: the enemy gave way and fled in every direction.' Of all Leval's division there now remained unbroken only the single battalion of *grenadiers réunis* under Colonel Meunier behind the right rear. The routed 54th fled diagonally to take cover behind it. Belson did not pursue very rapidly, and this wing of the beaten division moved off to the flank, covered by the grenadiers, and presently met the wrecks of the 8th and the 45th not far north of the Laguna del Puerco, the pool

which lies beyond the heath, to the east. It may not be out of place to give the losses: the 54th, with 1,300 men present, lost 323—about one man in four. The grenadiers hardly suffered at all, never having come into close action. Of the British opposite them, the 28th, with 450 men in the field, had 86 casualties; the Coldstream companies lost 58 out of 211 [1].

Just as Leval's division arrived near the Laguna, it was joined by the wrecks of Ruffin's, descending in disorder from the northern slope of the Cerro. It says much for the resolution of Victor that he succeeded in halting the two disorganized masses, and deployed two or three comparatively intact battalions and the ten guns which remained to him, to cover the rallying of the rest. At the same moment his cavalry, the 1st Dragoons, which had galloped away round the east side of the Cerro when Ruffin was beaten off it, came in and drew up on the right and left of the whole. It was a bold bid to secure an unmolested retreat, for no more could be hoped. Some time was available for rallying the troops, for Graham had also to get his exhausted men into order. They came up at last, Wheatley's brigade on the left, Dilkes's on the right, the guns in the centre. The latter were set to play on the new front of the French, which they did with great effect, the enemy being in a cramped mass. The skirmishers went forward, and a third separate engagement seemed about to begin, when a small new force intervened. This was one of the two squadrons of German hussars, which had followed the French dragoons around the back of the Cerro, not on the orders of Whittingham, who made no haste to pursue, but on those of Graham's aide-de-camp Ponsonby, who had carried them off on his own responsibility. Coming like a whirlwind across the lower slope of the hill, this squadron upset the French squadron of the 1st Dragoons which formed Victor's flank guard on this side, and drove it in upon the infantry. Small though the shock was, it sufficed to upset the equilibrium of the demoralized French divisions. They went off in a sudden rush, leaving behind them two more guns, and streamed across the plain towards Chiclana.

The battle was over; there was no pursuit, for the cautious

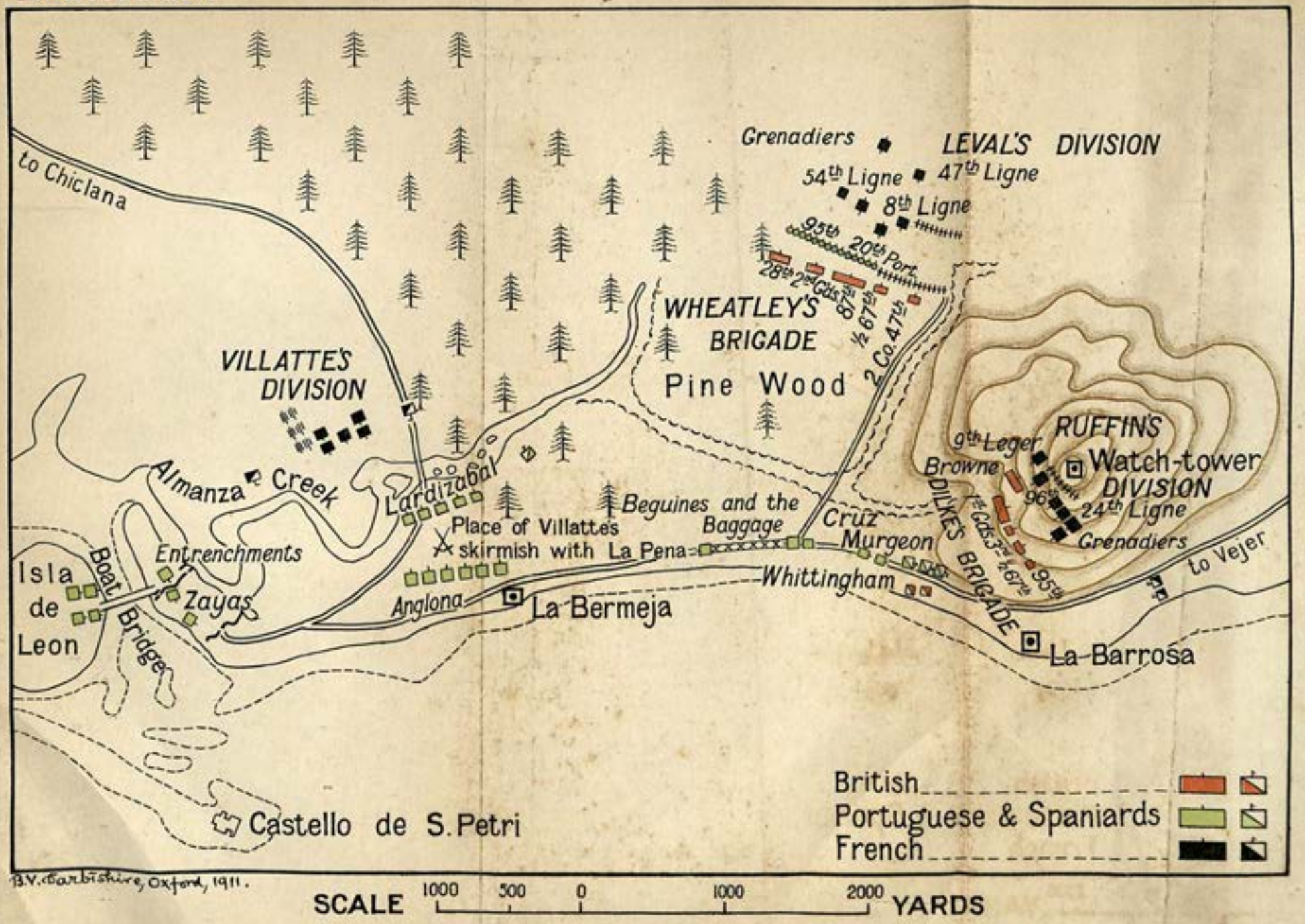
[1] These two companies, whose losses, as it is seen here, were heavy, must have been engaged with part of the left battalion of the French 54th.

Whittingham came up ten minutes too late with the rest of the cavalry, in time to see the last of the enemy disappearing in the woods. With him came up also the two infantry battalions under Cruz Murgeon, and these were the only Spanish troops that Graham saw during the battle.

It may be noted that we have hitherto not had occasion to say one word of General La Peña or his two infantry divisions since the main action began. On being informed, at the same time as Graham, of the approach of Victor from Chiclana, La Peña had no thought save to defend the isthmus by the Torre Bermeja against the approaching enemy. He drew up his own eleven battalions across it in a double or treble line, while Zayas, with those which had come out of Cadiz, watched Villatte across the Almanza creek. When Beguines appeared from the Cerro by the coast-track, he was put into the same mass, which must have risen to something like 10,000 men. Presently news came from the wood that Graham had faced about and was fighting the French. La Peña, as his own dispatch shows, concluded that the English must inevitably be beaten, and refused to stir a man to support them or to bring them off. Zayas repeatedly asked leave to march up to join Wheatley's flank, or to cross the Almanza and to attack Villatte, but was refused permission. The first report, to the effect that Graham was driving the French back, La Peña refused to credit. It was not till the fugitives of Leval's division were seen retreating past the head of the Almanza creek, that he could be got to accept the idea that Graham was victorious. And when pressed to join in the pursuit by Zayas, he merely said that the men were tired, and the day far spent. The reaping of the fruits of victory might be left for the morrow.

When it is remembered that La Peña was only two miles from Wheatley's fighting-ground, and three from the Cerro, his conduct seems astounding as well as selfish. Graham's fight lasted nearly two hours. La Peña could have ridden over, to see what was going on, in a quarter of an hour. He refused to stir, and deliberately sacrificed his allies, because he had got a comfortable, almost an impregnable, position across the narrow isthmus, and would not move out of it, whatever might happen to Graham. This timid and selfish policy was an exact repetition of his betrayal of Castaños at Tudela in 1808. With his 10,000

BARROSA



B.V. Barbishire, Oxford, 1911.

men he could have crushed Villatte if he had advanced on one front, or have annihilated the remnants of Ruffin and Leval, if he had chosen to act on the other.

He had his reward: next morning Graham, after collecting his wounded and his trophies, recrossed into the Isle of Leon, formally giving notice that in consequence of yesterday's proceedings, he was forced to withdraw his consent, given in February, to serve under La Peña, and to fall back on the discretional orders given by the British Government not to undertake any operations in which he was not himself in chief command. It is impossible to blame him; no one could deny, after what had happened on the 5th, that it was absolutely unsafe to go out in La Peña's company. Wellington sent his complete approval to Graham, well remembering his own experiences with Cuesta in 1809[1]. 'I concur in the propriety of your withdrawing to the Isla on the 6th,' he wrote, 'as much as I admire the promptitude and determination of your attack on the 5th[1].'

The division marched back into the Isla with only 4,000 men in the ranks; 1,238 had fallen or been disabled at Barrosa—almost one casualty among every four men in the field. But Victor had been hit much harder; out of 7,300 men in the divisions of Leval and Ruffin much more than one in four, viz. no less than 2,062, were *hors de combat*; 262 had been killed, 1,694 wounded, 134 unwounded prisoners were taken, along with the eagle and five guns[2]. The units that had fought in the Cerro and on the heath by the wood were absolutely demoralized; it would have been impossible to put them in line again for several days.

If the slightest push forward had been made on the 6th, it is certain that the siege would have been raised. Victor had rallied the broken troops behind the wood of Chiclana on Villatte's comparatively intact division, and had been joined in the late afternoon by Cassagne's 3,000 men, who had at last come up from Medina Sidonia. But there was panic all along the Lines: while the battle had been going on, English and Spanish gunboats had threatened their garrison, and had made small disem-

[1] Wellington to Graham, from Santa Marinha, March 25th. (*Dispatches*, vii. 396.)

[2] See the figures of losses in Appendix No. V.

barkations at one or two points; a battery had been captured near Santa Maria. If a more serious attack were made from the sea next morning, it was clear that the line would break at some point. 'The sinister phrases "destruction of the forts" and "abandonment of the position" flew from mouth to mouth[1].' Victor called a council of war, and proposed to offer a second battle behind Chiclana; but he found little support among the generals. It was finally decided that, if the Allies should come on in full force next morning, only such resistance should be made as would allow time to blow up most of the forts, and burn the stores and the flotilla. The 1st Corps would retreat on Seville. Victor proposed that one or two positions, where there were solid closed works, like Fort Sénarmont and the Trocadero, should be left garrisoned, and told to defend themselves until the army should return, strengthened by Soult and Sebastiani, to relieve them. It is doubtful whether he would really have risked this move, since the time of his return would have been most uncertain, and he might very probably have been making a present to the enemy of any troops left behind in isolated posts.

On the morning of the 6th the French retired behind the Saltillo river, leaving the 3rd Division (now commanded by Cassagne, for Villatte had been wounded) on the further side, with orders to retire when seriously attacked, and to issue a signal for the blowing up of all the forts of the south wing of the Lines, at the moment that the retreat should begin. Cassagne was then to rejoin the Marshal behind the Rio San Pedro, beyond Puerto Real, skirmishing as he went. But no trace of the Allies was to be seen on the morning of the 6th, and Cassagne was not forced to move back, though by mistake one battery was blown up without the signal being given[2]. The only sign of life on the part of the enemy was that a swarm of English gunboats and launches appeared at the north end of the lines, and threw ashore 600 seamen and marines, who occupied Puerto Santa Maria for some hours, and destroyed all the smaller batteries between that place and Rota unhindered. For the French had concentrated in

[1] Lapéne, *Campagnes de 1810–11*, p. 121.

[2] See, for a curious note concerning this incident, Lapéne, Appendix, p. 256.

the fort of Santa Catalina and abandoned all their minor posts. But the flotilla withdrew at dusk, leaving Victor much puzzled as to the purpose of his adversaries. On the morning of March 7th he sent out a cavalry reconnaissance of several squadrons, which brought back the astonishing news that it had explored the whole of the country between Chiclana and the sea, including the battlefield, and had seen no hostile troops, save a large encampment on the Bermeja isthmus, just above the bridge of boats leading into the Isla de Leon.

What had happened was that La Peña had determined to give up the expedition and retire to Cadiz. He had declined to listen to a proposition made by Graham and Admiral Keats that he should advance cautiously towards Chiclana, while the British naval and land forces made a combined attack upon the Trocadero [1]. He did not even send out cavalry patrols to discover what had become of Victor; if they had gone forth, they would have found that the Marshal had retired beyond the Saltillo, and would have discerned his preparations for a general retreat. But after remaining encamped by the Torre Bermeja during the whole of the 6th and the greater part of the 7th, the Spanish army crossed the bridge of boats into the Isla, and took it up behind them. Only Beguines and his three battalions were left on the continent, with orders to return to their old haunts in the Ronda mountains. This little force retired to Medina Sidonia on the 8th, and repulsed there a French column of 600 men which came up to occupy the town. But next day a whole brigade marched against them, whereupon Beguines evacuated Medina and went off towards San Roque and Algeçiras.

Victor was therefore able on the 8th to reoccupy the evacuated southern wing of his lines, and to issue an absurd dispatch, in which he claimed that Barrosa had been a victory. But for the

[1] It is sometimes asserted that La Peña proposed to continue the campaign, and was foiled by Graham's departure into the Isla. But we have Graham's own statement, in his dispatch to Henry Wellesley of March 24, that no such proposal was made. 'The only regret expressed to me at Head Quarters on the morning of the 6th, on knowing of my intention to send the British troops across the Santi Petri, was that the opportunity of withdrawing the Spanish troops during the night was lost, and on my observing that after such a defeat there was no risk of attack from the enemy, a very contrary opinion was expressed.'

loss of 2,000 men, and a severe shock inflicted on the morale of his troops, he was in exactly the same position that he had held on the 4th. The whole fruits of the battle of Barrosa had been lost. What they might have been it is possible up to a certain point to foresee. Supposing that Graham and not La Peña had been in command, the army, raised to nearly 20,000 men by the junction of Zayas and of the 2,000 Anglo-Portuguese still in Cadiz, would have marched on Chiclana upon the 6th. Victor would have blown up the Lines and retired towards Seville, but there would have been no reinforcements for him there, and he could only have been brought up to fighting strength by the calling in of Sebastiani and Godinot. But, if these generals came up to his aid, Granada and Cordova would have had to be evacuated, and the insurgents would have swept all over Eastern Andalusia. The Allies could not have held the field, for even before Soult's return from Badajoz there were still 50,000 French troops south of the Sierra Morena. The siege of Cadiz would ultimately, no doubt, have been recommenced, Granada and Cordova reoccupied. But meanwhile the immense work spent on the Lines would have had to be recommenced *de novo*, and the ascendancy of the French arms in the south would have received a rude shock. Possibly Soult might have blown up Badajoz after its fall on March 12th, instead of holding it, for he would have required all his strength to reconquer Andalusia. But further than the immediate result of the inevitable raising of the siege of Cadiz it is useless to make speculations.

The alarms of the French in Andalusia did not end with Victor's reoccupation of the lines. Another episode was still to be played out before matters settled down. The indefatigable Ballasteros, having rested for a short time in Portugal, came back into the Condado de Niebla in the end of February with 4,000 men. He defeated on the Rio Tinto General Remond, whose weak column was the only French force left west of the Guadalquivir since Gazan's departure (March 2). He then marched promptly on Seville, having good information of the weakness of the garrison that had been left there. On March 5th, the day of Barrosa, he was at San Lucar la Mayor, only twenty miles from the great city. The governor, Daricau, came out against him and joined Remond with 1,600 men and

three guns, all that he could dispose of, leaving Seville in the hands of a miserable garrison, composed of convalescents and *juramentados* of doubtful faith. If Daricau had been beaten, the city and all its establishments must have been lost in a day. But Ballasteros refused to fight, and retired behind the Rio Tinto, having had false news that a force sent from Estremadura by Soult was on his flank. Daricau returned to Seville on March 9th, leaving Remond to observe Ballasteros, and was joined by some detachments sent very tardily by Godinot to strengthen the garrison. But he had received such alarming accounts of the results of the battle of Barrosa, that he sent these troops on to Victor, and remained with a very weak force in the city. But on March 9th Ballasteros, suddenly coming back from the Rio Tinto, surprised Remond at La Palma, took two guns from him, and drove him back into Seville. On the 11th the Spanish general was back at San Lucar, and causing great dismay to Daricau, who sent urgent demands for help to Soult. Since Barrosa he could look for no help from elsewhere. He was saved by the rumour of the capitulation of Badajoz, which frightened Ballasteros away, for the Spaniard rightly judged that Soult could, and must, send a considerable force against him, now that his hands were freed.

When, therefore, the Marshal, as we have already seen [1], came back in haste to Andalusia with Gazan's division, fearing that he might find Ballasteros in Seville, and Graham pursuing Victor from the evacuated lines of Cadiz, he was agreeably surprised to find that both dangers had been avoided, and that the crisis in Andalusia was at an end. His further movements belong to a different campaign, and will be related in their due place.

Meanwhile Graham and La Peña were engaged in a violent controversy. The British general had sent the most scathing comments on his colleague's conduct to the ambassador, Henry Wellesley, and to Wellington, and made his complaints also to the Regency. La Peña on the other hand claimed the credit of the victory of Barrosa for his own skilful management; according to his magniloquent dispatches all had gone well, till Graham spoilt the campaign by taking his division back to Cadiz. The Regency seemed partly to believe him, as they

[1] See p. 62 above.

conferred on him the Grand Cross of the Order of Charles III, though at the same time they offered Graham the title of a grandee of Spain, which he refused, for he would not be honoured in such company. But Spanish as well as British public opinion was so much against La Peña, that he was almost immediately deprived of his command, which was given to the Marquis Coupigny; while Graham, whose strong language had made it impossible for him to be left in contact with the Regency, was withdrawn to serve with Wellington in Portugal, and made over the charge of the Anglo-Portuguese troops at Cadiz to General Cooke. Summing up the results of the Barrosa campaign, we may say that all it had accomplished was so to alarm Soult that he came back in haste from Estremadura, leaving there under Mortier a force far too weak to threaten any harm to Wellington and Portugal. But even if Barrosa had never been fought, Soult would have been harmless in any case, because Masséna was gone from Santarem before Badajoz fell.

SECTION XXIV

MASSÉNA'S RETREAT FROM PORTUGAL

CHAPTER I

SANTAREM TO CELORICO. MARCH 9-22ND, 1811

On the 9th of March Wellington began at last to discover the real position of the various French corps; till their rear was well past Thomar, it had been difficult to divine the main trend of their movements, for the various columns had been crossing each other's routes in a very puzzling fashion. But it now became clear that Masséna was intending to use all the three lines of communication which lead from the plain of the Tagus to the lower valley of the Mondego. Reynier and the 2nd Corps, after passing Thomar, had taken the bad mountain road by Cabaços and Espinhal, far to the east, and would come down on to the Mondego near the Ponte de Murcella, a little above Coimbra. The 8th Corps had taken the central road, that by Chão de Maçans and Ameiro, which joins the main Lisbon-Coimbra *chaussée* at Pombal. Loison and his division, having crossed the route of Reynier, fell into the Chão de Maçans road behind Junot. Ney, after holding Leiria till the 9th, with the divisions of Marchand and Mermet, fell back on that day a march along the great road in the plain (the Lisbon-Coimbra *chaussée* mentioned above), and then halted. In front of him was marching Drouet with Conroux's division of the 9th Corps, escorting the main train of the army, such as it was; it reached Travaço do Baixo, five miles south of Pombal, on the night of the 9th. Montbrun's reserve cavalry was all with Ney. Of the three columns Reynier's was 11,000 strong, that formed by Junot with Loison in his rear had about 16,000 men, that of Ney and Montbrun, with Conroux in front of them, comprised over 20,000 sabres and bayonets. The main fact to be borne in mind by the British general was that Reynier had been sent

on an external road, separated by a very difficult mountain chain from those followed by the other two columns, but that Ney and Junot would undoubtedly unite at Pombal, where their roads met, so that a mass of 35,000 men would be collected at that important centre of communication on the 10th or the 11th. But Reynier could not join them till the columns should have got down to the Mondego, some days later[1]. Masséna was, rightly enough, trying to use as many roads as possible, both to avoid overcrowding of troops and trains on a single road, and also in order that wider foraging might be possible, when the army should get out of the devastated region north of Thomar, and descend into the valley of the Mondego, where it was hoped that food would be far more procurable. But the result of the disposition was that Reynier would not be available for several days, if the British threw their main force on to the rear of Ney and Junot and brought them to action.

The road Leiria-Coimbra was moreover both the best and the shortest of all those that led from the position now reached by Wellington's marching columns to the valley of the Mondego. By following it, and hustling hard the French column that had taken it, the commander of the Allies might hope to reach Coimbra in time to prevent the French from taking up a secure position on the lower Mondego, and establishing themselves in cantonments on its banks. For it was his main object to turn them away from Coimbra and the coast-plain, and to force them up into the eastern mountains and towards the borders of Spain. At first he did not think that the line of the Mondego could be

[1] The forces of the French corps five days later (but the numbers were much the same still) were, to be exact [Return of March 15 in French *Archives Nationales*]—

Reynier's 2nd Corps	10,251 men
Junot's 8th Corps	9,794 ,,
Loison's Division	4,734 ,,
Ney's other Divisions, horse and foot	11,066 ,,
Montbrun's Reserve Cavalry	2,435 ,,
Conroux's Division of the 9th Corps	5,000 ,,
Artillery Reserves, Train, Sappers, Marine Battalion, &c.	5,855 ,,
Total	49,135 men

all exclusive of sick and wounded.

held against the retreating French by the trifling Portuguese militia force that lay behind it—Trant's seven battalions at Coimbra, Wilson's four at Peñacova, which did not amount together to more than 5,000 or 6,000 troops of very inferior quality. He issued orders to those generals to retire, without committing themselves to an attempt to defend the line of the river —Trant had better go behind the Vouga, Wilson might retire on Vizeu; both would ultimately join the northern reserves under Baccelar, and co-operate with that general in defending the city of Oporto[1]. But Wellington hoped that matters would never reach the point at which the safety of Oporto came in question, for he thought that he would be pressing the rear of the French so hard in a few days, that they would be thinking of other things than taking the offensive against northern Portugal. He would do his best to thrust them north-eastward, towards the frontiers of Spain. As a matter of fact we shall see that he more than fulfilled his own forecast, for the French were so hotly pursued that they never succeeded in crossing the Mondego or seizing Coimbra. When they had reached its gates, Masséna refused to take the risk of passing the river at a moment when his rear was in such dire trouble that the whole army would have been in danger of destruction, if he had been attacked when the actual operation of passage was in progress.

Meanwhile the original movement of Reynier, Junot, and Loison towards Thomar had caused Wellington to spread his pursuing troops more towards the east than was convenient, when it turned out that only Reynier was taking the mountain road towards Espinhal, and that the other columns were going to join Ney on the Leiria-Coimbra road. Originally only the Light Division and Pack's Portuguese had followed Ney, and they formed the only body of troops available for the pursuit of what was now detected to be the largest body of the enemy,

[1] Wellington to Baccelar, March 8: 'I conclude that Colonel Trant will have retired from Coimbra upon the bridge of the Vouga, which he should destroy, and from thence on Oporto. The enemy have no boats, and I hope to be able to press them so hard that they can get none on the Mondego. . . . If the enemy should turn toward Vizeu, you will of course do all that you can to annoy them in their march, but send all your baggage, &c., across the Douro.' (*Dispatches*, vii. p. 347.)

until the other divisions should come up from the rear, or be marched westward from the Thomar region.

On the 9th Wellington's total available force, minus the 2nd Division and Hamilton's Portuguese, now halted about Abrantes and destined for Estremadura, and minus also the regiments just landed at Lisbon, was about 46,000 men[1]. Of these the Light Division and Pack's Portuguese, with Anson's cavalry brigade (now under Arentschildt), were at Leiria, in close touch with Ney's retreating corps. But the 1st, 4th, and 6th Divisions and De Grey's heavy dragoons were at Thomar, two full marches east of the Light Division; Picton with the 3rd Division was at Porto de Mos on the Santarem–Leiria *chaussée*, a day's journey behind the vanguard. The 5th Division and the independent Portuguese brigade of Ashworth were a march behind Picton, about Alcanhede.

If Ney were to be joined by Junot and Loison, as now seemed probable, in the direction of Pombal, it would take one full day for the 3rd Division to join the vanguard, two full days for the rest of the army to come up. It would not be till the 11th

[1] Viz.:

1st Division	8,100 of all ranks, all British		
3rd Division	4,500	,,	and 1,550 Portuguese
4th Division	4,800	,,	and 2,100 ,,
5th Division	3,800	,,	and 1,800 ,,
6th Division	3,850	,,	and 2,300 ,,
Light Division	3,400	,,	and 900 ,,
Pack's Portuguese Brigade			2,100
Ashworth's Portuguese Brigade			2,500
Cavalry, British	2,430		
,, Portuguese			500
Artillery, British	1,000		
,, Portuguese			500
Engineers, Waggon Train, &c.	200		
Total British	32,080	and	14,250 Portuguese

The 2nd Division, left behind near Abrantes, had about 6,100 of all ranks. Hamilton's Portuguese Division about 4,200, Fane's British (13th Lt. Dragoons) and Portuguese cavalry was about 1,000 sabres, artillery of both nations for the Army of Estremadura about 500. The 7th Division, now being formed at Lisbon, was composed of 2,800 British and 2,300 Portuguese. There were two battalions not belonging to the 7th Division marching up with it, with 1,300 bayonets (2/52nd, 2/88th).

that a mass of combatants would be collected sufficient to attack the enemy, if he held the Pombal position. And this concentration had to be carried out for safety's sake; it would have been insane to bid the Light Division and Pack, the only troops immediately available, to fall upon Ney and Junot and their 35,000 men. Accordingly Wellington directed the 3rd and 5th Divisions to close up rapidly upon the vanguard along the *chaussée*, while the mass of troops around Thomar was to follow the Chão de Maçans road in Junot's track and unite with the other column in front of Pombal on the 11th. Only Nightingale's brigade of the 1st Division was detached, with one squadron of dragoons, to follow Reynier on his 'eccentric' line of retreat, along the rough mountain road to Espinhal. Forty-three thousand men out of the 46,000 which formed the disposable total of Wellington's army were sent in pursuit of Masséna's main body.

The bringing up of the rear divisions took time. Meanwhile the Light Division with Pack's Portuguese and the attached cavalry, now united under the temporary control of Sir William Erskine (for Robert Craufurd, the natural commander of such a vanguard, was on leave in England), kept close to Ney's heels, and on the 10th were at Venda Nova, immediately in front of his position at Pombal. The 4th Division were at Cacharia on the same night, the 1st and 6th at Acentis and other villages near Thomar, the 3rd at Leiria, the 5th at Porto de Mos. All these marches were executed through a country full of scenes of horror: Picton, not a man easily to be moved by sentiment, wrote, 'Nothing can exceed the devastation and cruelties committed by the enemy during his retreat: he has set fire to all the villages and murdered all the peasantry for leagues on each flank of his march[1].' The large town of Leiria was burning in five places when the Light Division reached it. The great historic monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha had been wrecked in mere spite—the former, according to Wellington, by direct order from the French head quarters. Every by-road and ravine was strewn with corpses; a note from Gratton's interesting journal of the marches of the 88th gives an average picture of

[1] Picton to Col. Pleydell, a letter printed in Robinson's *Life of Picton*, i. 385.

what the British army saw. 'At the entrance of a cave,' he writes, 'lay an old man, a woman, and two young men, all dead. The cave, no doubt, had served them as an asylum in the preceding winter, and appearances warranted the supposition that these poor creatures, in a vain effort to save their little store of provisions, fell victims to the ferocity of their murderers. The clothes of the young peasants were torn to atoms, and bore testimony that they did not lose their lives without a struggle. The hands of one were dreadfully mangled, as if in his last efforts he had grasped the sword which ultimately dispatched him. Beside him lay his companion, his brother perhaps, covered with wounds. A little to the right was the old man: he lay on his back with his breast bare; two large wounds were over his heart, and the back of his head was beaten to pieces. Near him lay an old rusty bayonet lashed to a pole; one of his hands grasped a bunch of hair, torn no doubt from the head of his assassin; the old woman had probably been strangled, as no wound appeared on her body. At some distance from the spot were two wounded soldiers of the French 4th Léger, abandoned by their comrades. These poor wretches were surrounded by half a dozen Portuguese, who were taking on them the horrible vengeance common during this contest. On our approach they dispersed and fled: both the Frenchmen were still alive, and asked us to shoot them. We dared not, and when we had passed on, we could perceive the peasants descending from the hill, like vultures who have been scared from their prey, but return with redoubled voracity.'

Before the marching divisions came up from the rear, there was a cavalry skirmish in front of Pombal between Arentschildt's Light Horse (16th and 1st Hussars of the K.G.L.) and some of Montbrun's dragoons, which was of little importance as to results, but assumes such a different complexion in the narratives of the combatants on the opposite sides that it is hardly possible to believe that they are writing of the same event[1].

[1] Narrative of Delagrave: 'La cavalerie anglaise se déployait avec une certaine audace, et semblait vouloir provoquer un combat. Le Général Montbrun s'avança fièrement pour l'accepter. Les Anglais avaient des chevaux plus frais que les nôtres, et ils semblaient s'en prévaloir. Mais nos gens avaient pour eux le vrai courage et le sang-froid. Quelques

During the hours on the 10th of March, while the English columns were toiling up from the rear to join the Light Division, Ney's and Junot's corps remained stationary, the former at the town of Pombal, the latter at Venda da Cruz, five miles behind it, resting, and seeking (mostly in vain) for provisions. Masséna was determined not to move backward before he should be obliged. Montbrun's dragoons reconnoitred as far as the bridge of Coimbra, which they found with two of its arches broken, and cannon visible on the further side. The small force in sight was the rearguard of Trant's Militia brigade, which (in accordance with Wellington's orders) was preparing to draw back towards the Vouga, but held on to Coimbra till a serious attack should be delivered. Masséna thereupon ordered his engineer, Colonel Valazé, to search for a convenient spot below the town, at which a flying bridge might be thrown across the

escadrons de dragons, les plus avancés, en voyant qu'on les chargeait au grand galop, s'arrêtèrent et poussèrent le sabre en avant, et dans cette position reçurent de pied ferme l'ennemi. Cette manœuvre eut un plein succès. L'ennemi fut rompu, désuni, il eut beaucoup d'hommes et de chevaux tant tués que blessés. Ensuite les nôtres, dont pas un n'avait été touché, tirant un prompt parti de leur bon ordre, et du désordre des Anglais, chargèrent à leur tour, et eurent en quelques minutes bon marché de cette troupe, qui avait d'abord montré tant d'audace.' (*Campagne de Portugal*, pp. 191–2.)

Narrative of Tomkinson, 16th Light Dragoons: 'We followed the enemy up to the Pombal plain, where they showed eight squadrons formed on the heath in front. The Hussars advanced with one squadron in front and three in support, on which the enemy's skirmishers retired, and the whole eight squadrons began to withdraw. We passed the defile in our front, and came up in time to join the Hussars in their charge. We charged and broke one squadron of the enemy, drove that on to the second, and so on, till the whole eight were altogether in the greatest confusion, when we drove them on to their main support. We wounded several and took a few prisoners, and should have made more, but that they were so thick that we could not get into them. The French officers called on the men supporting to advance: but not a man moved.' (*Diary*, p. 79.)

The returns show that the total loss of the British cavalry was nine men on this day. Six belonged to the Hussars. The report states that one officer and eleven men of the French were taken prisoners (see Beamish, *History of the K.G.L.*, i. p. 320). Wellington's dispatch merely says, 'The Hussars distinguished themselves in a charge, made under the command of Colonel Arentschildt.'

Mondego. On this day Reynier and the 2nd Corps, far off on the eastern mountain road, reached Espinhal, the first village beyond the Serra da Estrella. As that place has a by-road leading to Coimbra, this detached body was getting nearer to a possible reunion with the main body.

On the morning of March 11th the 3rd Division joined Wellington's vanguard after a toilsome march, and the 4th Division, heading the column which came from Thomar, was reported to be in supporting distance. Ney, apparently having detected the arrival of British reinforcements, then drew back one of his divisions, and left the other (Mermet) in position on the heights behind the town, with a single battalion holding the lofty but ruined castle which dominates the place. Wellington, on perceiving that the enemy was drawing back, ordered Elder's battalion of Caçadores [1], supported by two companies of the 95th Rifles, to charge across the bridge and occupy the town, while the rest of the Light Division advanced in support, and Picton moved to the left, to cross the stream lower down. The attacking force passed the narrow bridge under fire, cleared the nearer streets and assailed the castle and the small force left there. Seeing his rearguard in danger of being cut off, and noting that Elder's force was small, Ney came down from the heights with four battalions of the 6th Léger and the 69th Ligne, thrust back the Caçadores and the supporting rifle companies, and brought off the troops in the castle. He barricaded the main street, and set fire to the houses along it in several places before departing; these precautions detained for some minutes the main column of the Light Division, which was hurrying up to reinforce its van. The French were all retiring up the hill before they could be got at, and only suffered a little from Ross's guns, which were hurried up to play upon the retreating column, as it re-formed in the position beyond Pombal. By the time that the Light Division had disentangled itself from the burning town, and Picton had crossed the stream on the left, the day was far spent; and Ney retired at his leisure after dark, without having been further incommoded. The British followed, and encamped on the further side of the water, ready for pursuit next morning. Ney was much praised for the

[1] No. 3 of that arm.

tactical skill which he had shown in saving his rearguard, and Erskine was thought to have handled the Light Division clumsily. The French losses, trifling as they were, much exceeded those of the Allies—they lost four officers and fifty-nine men, all in the 6th and 69th. The Caçadores lost ten rank and file killed, and an officer and twenty men wounded—the two companies of the 95th had an ensign and four men wounded—a total of thirty-seven, little more than half the French loss.

Late on this day the 4th Division came up, and the 5th, 6th, and 1st were reported to be close behind, so that Wellington had his main body at last collected. He started the decisive operations on the following morning at 5 o'clock, advancing in three columns towards Venda da Cruz, where Ney had been located on the previous night by the cavalry scouts. Picton and the 3rd Division were on the right, Pack's Portuguese in the centre, the Light Division on the left, with the 4th Division supporting on the high-road, and the rest following behind. But the enemy had retired at an equally early hour, and was not to be found at Venda da Cruz. He had gone back to Redinha, where there is a bridge over the Soure river, forming a defile behind the village, and a high plateau flanked by woods in its front. Mermet's division formed on the plateau, with Marchand's in support, while the rest of the French were not far off, Loison's division being at Rabaçal, three miles to the east, and Junot's corps at Condeixa, five miles behind Redinha. Drouet, with Conroux's division, had started during the night on the road for Ponte de Murcella and the Spanish frontier, escorting a convoy of 800 sick and wounded and the small remains of the reserve park of the army. He had orders to clear the *chaussée* and to get into touch with Claparéde, who was now lying with the other division of the 9th Corps at Celorico. This detachment would have revealed to Wellington, had he known of it, that Masséna was more anxious to secure his line of communication with Spain than to seize Coimbra and establish himself on the line of the Mondego. For a good general, intending to take risks in a general action, does not detach 5,000 men on the eve of the decisive day. It is only second-rate commanders who (like King Joseph at Vittoria in 1813) commit such mistakes.

It is clear that if Masséna had intended to make a serious blow at Coimbra, he ought to have done so at latest on the 10th or 11th, before the English army was close enough to hinder him. Junot's corps, which was entirely covered by Ney and the rearguard, was well placed for a blow at the city, as it was little more than ten miles from the Mondego and the broken bridge. But Masséna did not march Junot in this direction, but kept him in a position to support Ney, while only some squadrons of Montbrun's cavalry were sent against Coimbra. That general's proceedings showed great timidity and feebleness. On the afternoon of the 10th, according to Trant's dispatch, his advanced guard appeared on the Monte de Esperança, the height opposite Coimbra, and was seen to send down reconnoitring parties towards the banks of the river, both above and below the city, leaving unmolested the broken bridge, behind which were the guns placed in the battery which Trant had thrown up to protect his retreat. Much rain had fallen on the preceding night, the river was full, and Montbrun's scouts reported to him and to his companion the Engineer-colonel Valazé that they could not find the fords which, as they had been told, were situated at the spots that they had visited. On the following day (March 11th), while the skirmish of Pombal was going on, Montbrun moved in nearer to the city, showing artillery and a cavalry brigade at the Cruz dos Moroiços, and occupying the convent of Santa Clara, which lies less than a mile from the bridge. One of his squadrons tried to pass at the ford of Pereira, five miles below the city, but owing to the strength of the current failed completely, the men who first tried the water regaining with difficulty the bank from which they had started. Nothing more was done by the French that day, and Montbrun reported to Masséna that he had received information that the whole of the brigades of Trant and Silveira were in Coimbra, and that he had seen artillery in position at the bridge[1]. The real force opposed to him was

[1] Some French authorities, favourable to Masséna, assert that he was not responsible for the failure to occupy Coimbra, that Ney, on the 10th, had been told to send Marcognet's brigade to support Montbrun, who said that he could not succeed without infantry help (Pelet, *Notes sur la campagne de Portugal*, p. 334). But Ney, it is said would not detach

seven battalions of Militia, some 3,000 men, and six guns. This was the last day on which it would have been possible for the French to seize Coimbra, for from the 12th onward Wellington was pressing them so hard that, if they had set themselves to force the passage, and had succeeded, their rearguard, and probably a great portion of their main body, would have been destroyed. For Ney, with all his tactical skill, could not have shaken off his pursuers in such a way as to allow 30,000 men to file over a single bridge, hastily repaired, when the Allies were in hot pursuit. The French engineers, indeed, reported that it would take several days to mend the bridge, even when the Portuguese had been driven away from the further bank. The main comment suggested by all this is that, since Masséna was intending to hold out on the Mondego, and to occupy its northern bank, according to his own dispatch sent to Napoleon, he ought to have taken measures to secure a safe passage many days back—at the first moment when his retreat began on the 5th of March. Part of the mass of troops accumulated at Leiria ought to have marched for Coimbra on March 6th. It was altogether too late to send a mere flying cavalry force to appear in front of the place on March 10th.

On March 12th Montbrun was prowling ineffectively along the south bank of the Mondego, and setting his horse artillery to engage in a futile exchange of fire with Trant's guns, while

the brigade. This seems most improbable, for (1) Junot's corps, which was in Ney's rear and five miles nearer to Coimbra, would have been the natural source from which to seek for infantry supports for Montbrun, and (2) Masséna does not accuse Ney of this particular piece of disobedience in his report to Berthier of March 19, nor in the later one of March 22, when he is giving his reasons for superseding his colleague and sending him home to France. He simply says, in recounting his reasons for not seizing Coimbra, that Montbrun and the engineers reported 'that the river was in flood, that the bridge had two arches broken, that the left bank was occupied by the forces of Trant and Silveira, and defended by cannon. It would have required several days to repair the bridge and to drive the Portuguese out of Coimbra; there was no pontoon train with the army, and not a single boat on the Mondego. In face of the danger of being attacked by Wellington's whole force while the passage was in progress, he resolved to renounce it.' The one battalion of infantry which was sent to Montbrun's aid on the 12th came from Solignac's division in Junot's corps—as might have been expected.

a battalion of infantry borrowed from Junot tried to creep upon the bridge, but was detected and driven off by grape. But Ney was already engaged in such sharp fighting at Redinha that he could not have drawn his troops off, or have escaped towards Coimbra, even if the passage of the Mondego had been forced. Wellington, it will be remembered, was advancing towards the 6th Corps in the morning, when he found that it had retired from Venda da Cruz on to another position. His cavalry discovered that not only was he in presence of the 6th Corps, but that another French column was on his flank at Rabaçal (this was Loison's division). Moreover, the 8th Corps was known to be not far off, for stragglers and sick from it had been picked up upon the preceding day. Seeing therefore that he might be called upon to face some 30,000 men, the British general resolved not to open the fight over hastily. When his three leading columns came up, Pack in the centre, Picton on the right, the Light Division on the left, they were halted in front of Mermet's line, and deployed; but no attack was made till the 4th Division had reached the front line and joined Pack, while the 1st and 5th were close behind. Then, at two o'clock in the afternoon, an encircling attack was made on Mermet's rearguard, the wings being thrown forward, while the centre was somewhat held back. The 3rd Division, entering the woods on the French left, the Light Division those on their right, advanced as quickly as they could through difficult ground. Pack and the 4th Division halted beyond musket-range of the centre, but suffered a little from artillery fire while waiting for the flank attacks to develop. After some twenty minutes of hot skirmishing among the trees, Mermet's flanks were turned by Picton on the side of the hills, and by the Light Division on the side of the plain, and Ney hastily drew back his front line behind the stream and the defile, where Marchand's division was waiting in support. The retreating battalions were somewhat jammed at the bridge, and lost heavily, while passing it only a few yards in front of the skirmishers of the Light Division. Picton tried to ford the stream higher up, in order to cut off the retreating force before it could reach its supports, but failed, the water turning out too deep and rapid for passage [1].

[1] I spent two interesting hours at Redinha on September 29, 1910, going

It took some time to file the Light and 3rd Divisions over the bridge, and to make a new line in face of Ney's second position on the ridge two miles beyond the stream. But when the two divisions once more went forward, each turning, as before, the enemy's flank opposed to it, while Pack and the 5th Division formed up again in the centre, Ney gave back without any very strenuous resistance, and, abandoning his second position, fell back upon Condeixa, a village with a defile in front of it, five miles north of Redinha on the great Coimbra *chaussée*.

The day's work had been a very pretty piece of manœuvring on both sides. Ney hung on to his two successive positions just so long as was safe, and absconded on each occasion at the critical moment, when his flanks were turned. A quarter of an hour's more delay would have been ruin, but the retreat was made just in time. The two stands had delayed Wellington for a day, and his army had only advanced ten miles in the twenty-four hours. Yet it is unjust to accuse the British general of over-caution, as Napier and all the French annalists have done. He was quite right not to attack with the first division that came up, and to wait till he had three and a half in line. For he was aware that great strength lay in front of him, and, for all he knew, the troops of Mermet might have been supported not only by Marchand, as was actually the case, but by the whole of Junot's corps. In that case an early attack would have meant a bloody check, and an enforced wait, till the 3rd, 4th, 1st, and 5th Divisions should have come up. As it was, the French rearguard was dislodged with a very modest loss on the part of the Allies, 12 officers and 193 men, of whom the large majority were in the Light and 3rd Divisions, the

round the battle-ground, guided by Mr. Reynolds of Barreiro. The village is most irregularly built, and the way to the bridge not obvious, the streets being tortuous and narrow. The place is easy to defend, but not easy to get out of. A courteous denizen of Redinha, Mr. J. J. Leitão, presented me with an unexploded British shrapnel shell, which he had got out of the sand of the river-bed just above the bridge. Several more had been found on this spot; they must have been thrown by the pursuing British artillery at the French column hurrying over the bridge, and had fallen short, into the water. Each contained thirty-two balls, but the powder had decayed into an impalpable red dust. The shell that we got is now in the United Service Museum.

troops which had done the work. But the 4th Division and Pack's Portuguese suffered some casualties, while waiting under cannon-fire for the flanking movement to take effect[1]. The French loss was 14 officers and 213 men, nearly all from Mermet's division, as that of Marchand was little engaged[2].

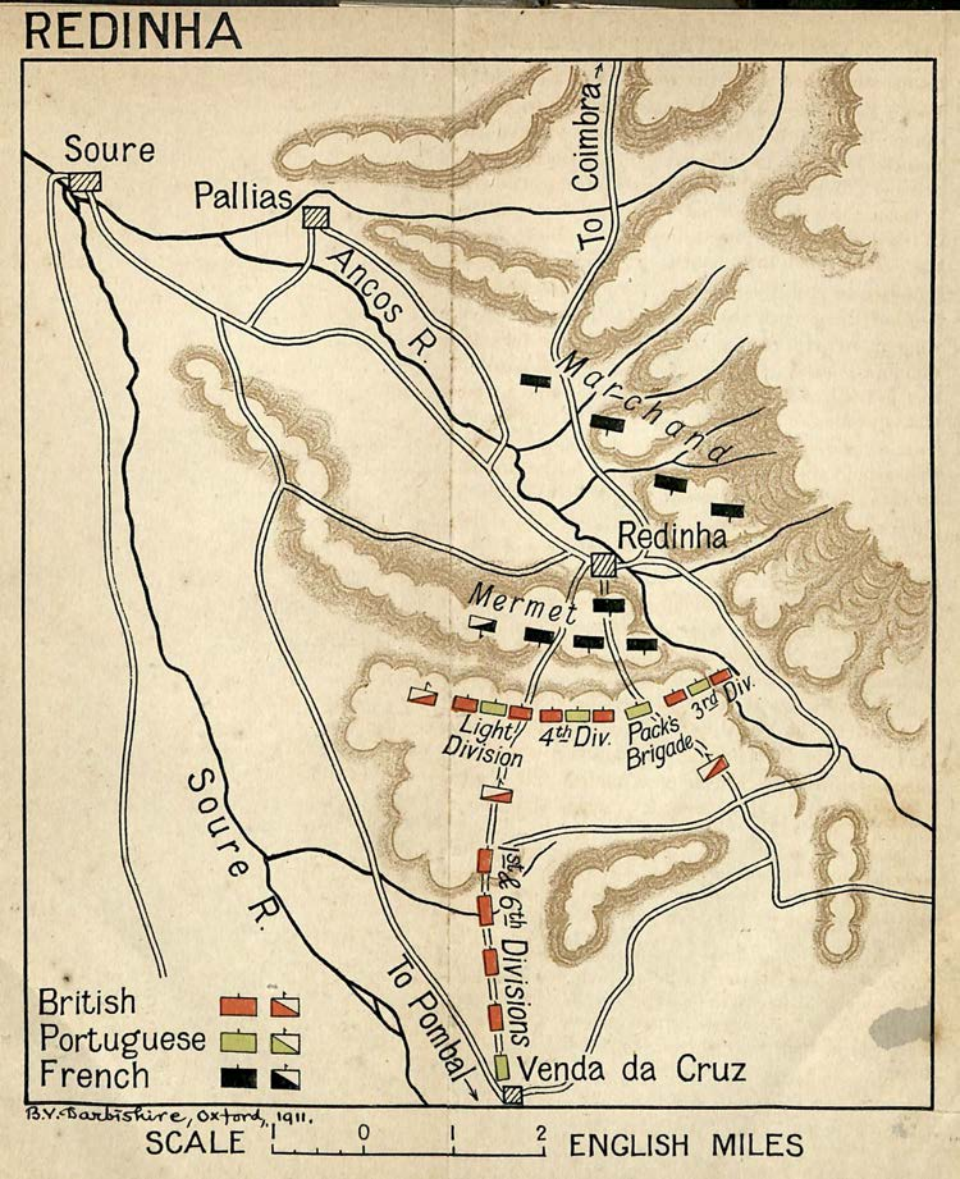
During this day the 6th Division, moving apart from the rest of the army, marched north-westward to Soure, and so got upon the western route to Coimbra. It was apparently Wellington's intention to push this detachment round the western or seaward flank of the French army, so as to threaten with it the right wing of any position that the enemy might take up across the Coimbra *chaussée*. Indeed, having found no hostile force of any sort in front of it, the 6th Division was able to push in quite close to Coimbra on the next day, and to take up a position at Ega, which menaced Ney and Junot's march across its front if they should still continue their retreat in the original direction. It was probably the movement of this division which caused the French to believe that Wellington had landed a detached force from ships at the mouth of the Mondego, and was pushing it forward towards Coimbra: an account of the march of this imaginary corps is to be found in several narratives[3].

Condeixa, to which Ney had retired on the evening of the combat of Redinha, is a most important strategical point, since here the *chaussée* leading to Coimbra is joined by the last cross-road which meets it south of the Mondego, that which runs eastward to the Ponte de Murcella and the Spanish frontier. As long as the French held Condeixa, they were in a position to choose between an attack on Coimbra and a retreat up the south bank of the river towards Almeida and their base. And

[1] See table of losses in Appendix III. Of the regiments the chief losers were the 95th (13 men), and 52nd (18 men).

[2] Of the fourteen French officers killed and wounded no less than thirteen were from the 25th Léger, and 27th and 50th Ligne of Mermet's division.

[3] e. g. in Delagrave, p. 201: 'Deux colonnes des siens remontaient le Mondégo, le long des rives: celle qui avait débarqué à Figueiras avait pour but principal de couvrir Coïmbre. . . . L'autre, qui remontait la rive gauche, avait été détachée de l'armée ennemie avec ordre de déborder et d'attaquer la droite des Français.' Belmas also speaks of this imaginary force.


REDINHA
Soure
Pallias
Ancos R.
To Coimbra
Marchand
Redinha
Mermet
Light Division
4th Div.
Pack's Brigade
3rd Div.
1st & 6th Divisions
Soure R.
To Pombal
Venda da Cruz
British
Portuguese
French
B.V. Barbishire, Oxford, 1911.
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with Wellington at his heels, Masséna had now to make his choice between the two courses. His dispatch of March 19th to Berthier informs us that he resolved for a moment to offer battle to the Allies at Condeixa, with the 6th and 8th Corps, calling in perhaps (though he does not mention it) the 2nd Corps from Espinhal, which is no more than twenty miles away. The reasons which he gives for not doing so are firstly, that, since the departure of Drouet and his division on the 11th, his whole force was no more than half that of Wellington; as a matter of fact he had still 45,000 men, his adversary just about the same number. Secondly, that the morale of the army was impaired by long privations and short rations. Thirdly, that the stock of ammunition was dangerously low, and the artillery horses could hardly move. Fourthly, that he was hampered by the fact that his lieutenants (he is alluding to Ney in especial) were set on abandoning Portugal, 'which contributes in no small degree to a lack of that harmony which ought to reign in an army.' Fifthly, that a defeat at Condeixa would mean the inevitable loss of all his artillery, train, wounded, and baggage, while a success would not seriously injure Wellington, who could always retire on to the Lines of Torres Vedras. Sixthly, that being in the midst of a population roused to fury by the ravages of his army, he found that he could gather in little or no food, and was fast using up the stock that he had brought with him. Taking all these points into consideration, and being informed by Montbrun that, even if he succeeded in seizing Coimbra, its bridge would take two days to repair, he had resolved to avoid a general action, to abandon any attempt to pass the Mondego, and to draw back towards the 9th Corps and the Spanish frontier, where he could find the food and the new equipment which the army needed.

Accordingly, on the early morning of March 13th the decisive step which committed Masséna to a retreat towards Celorico and the 9th Corps was taken. The 8th Corps was marched off, covering the train, along the road which leads by Miranda de Corvo to the Ponte de Murcella and the upper Mondego, instead of toward Coimbra, now only eight miles away. To cover its flank Loison's division was moved from Rabaçal, where it had lain on the day of the combat of Redinha, to Fonte Cuberta. Ney remained behind at Condeixa with his two old

divisions, to cover the fork of the roads, and to detain the Allies as long as possible, while Junot and the trains were toiling along the bad and mountainous road towards Miranda de Corvo. The 2nd Corps was still kept at Espinhal, where it was observed by Nightingale's brigade, which had dogged its steps at a cautious distance since the 9th.

These arrangements did not work very well, for Ney was turned out of the Condeixa position, much earlier than he or Masséna had expected, by Wellington's skilful manœuvres. The movement used against him was much the same as at Redinha; the 3rd Division marched by a mountain path to turn his left, while the 6th Division, coming in from Souré by a wide sweep, appeared at Ega, almost behind his right wing, and threatened to get between him and Coimbra. Meanwhile the 4th and Light Divisions, with the rest of the army behind them, were halted on distant heights in his front, ready to attack when the turning movements should become pronounced. Ney was, very properly, anxious about his retreat, for he could not any longer (as at Pombal and Redinha) give back to his rear, but was forced to take a side direction, in order to follow the 8th Corps on the Miranda de Corvo road. The moment that he saw Picton making for this road, to cut him off from the rest of the French, he set fire to the town of Condeixa and moved off in great haste, just avoiding Picton, to Casal Novo, a village five miles east of his first position, where he formed up again at dusk. The day's operations had been almost bloodless; nothing more than a few musket shots were exchanged by the skirmishers of the two sides. But they had been of the highest strategical importance, since they ended in the complete abandonment of the attempt to reach Coimbra by the French.

Incidentally, the rapid fashion in which Ney had been evicted from the cross-roads at Condeixa nearly led to disaster some of the outlying fractions of the French army. Masséna himself had halted at Fonte Cuberta, six miles to the south-east, with his staff and Loison's division, which was escorting the reserve artillery of the 6th and 8th Corps. He was intending to cover Ney's left from any wide turning movement by the British. The road on which this village lies falls into that from Condeixa to Miranda de Corvo about three miles from the first-

named place. Ney, when preparing to evacuate Condeixa, sent an aide-de-camp to advise the Commander-in-Chief that he was about to retire. But the officer charged with the message lost his way, and only arrived at Fonte Cuberta late in the afternoon with the dispatch[1]. By this time Ney had already reached Casal Novo, some distance beyond the point at which the Fonte Cuberta road fell into his line of retreat. Masséna and the division in his company were therefore cut off from their proper route for retiring on to the main army. Within a few minutes after the arrival of Ney's messenger, a patrol of the German hussars arrived at the village, and nearly rode into Masséna and his staff, who were dining in the open air under a tree outside its entrance. There was a mutual surprise; the Marshal's escort of fifty men ran to their arms, while the hussars halted, not understanding what they had come upon. If they had charged, Masséna might have been taken or slain, as several French narrators assert. He mounted and galloped back in haste towards Loison's infantry, who were camped in and beyond the village. The hussars went off to report to their squadron commander that Fonte Cuberta was still occupied—it had been with the object of obtaining information on this point that the reconnaissance had been sent out. Masséna hastened to put Loison's men under march for Casal Novo, by a very rugged side-track, called up Clausel's division to cover him, and got off in the dusk unhindered, save by a few flank skirmishers belonging to Picton's division, who came upon him in the dark and were brushed away with ease[2].

[1] Marbot says that the officer arrived four hours after the evacuation of Condeixa, though that place is only five miles from Fonte Cuberta (*Mémoires*, ii. 443). Fririon makes a much graver accusation against Ney, viz. that he sent no messenger at all, and that the allied cavalry were discovered by an officer named Girbault on Masséna's staff.

[2] For an account of this curious affair see Fririon, Noël (who was with Loison at the moment), Pelet, and Marbot. The latter (as always) gives the most picturesque and probably the least trustworthy account. He forgets to mention that Fonte Cuberta was occupied by Loison's 4,500 infantry, and writes as if a squadron of hussars had retired before Masséna's escort of 50 men. According to him the Marshal's night-retreat was much disturbed by the misadventures of his mistress (Renique's sister), whose horse repeatedly fell in the dark and rolled over her, to his intense anxiety. Masséna's dispatch says only, 'Le duc d'Elchingen

This incident led to a furious quarrel between Masséna and Ney, for the former asserted, as it seems, that the latter had promised to hold Condeixa for a whole day or more, and had moved off at noon out of mere malice, so as to leave his chief in an exposed position. If we may believe the narrative of Masséna's aide-de-camp, Fririon, he asserted that Ney had deliberately wished to get him captured, and had executed his retreat 'clandestinement'[1]. It was impossible to persuade him to the contrary, and he saved up his wrath for the next occasion when he should be able to convict Ney of open disobedience, and not of mere errors of judgement. There can be no doubt that he was doing an injustice to his lieutenant in suspecting him of such a monstrous plot: Ney was a man of honour; Masséna had himself such a doubtful record for probity that we can well understand his suspicion of others. In truth, what happened was that the younger Marshal had promised to defend Condeixa longer than was really possible, when Wellington (as on this day) was in his happiest mood, and manœuvring with a skill which made a long resistance impracticable.

But Loison's division was not the only French force which was in serious danger on March 13. Montbrun had lingered in front of Coimbra, till his retreat also was imperilled by the loss of Condeixa and its all-important bifurcation of roads. At eight o'clock in the morning he had made his last vain attempt to win his way into the city—this time by negotiation. He sent a *parlementaire* on to the broken bridge, with a demand that Trant should give up the place, and a promise that the citizens should suffer no harm, and the garrison should be allowed free

abandonna la position de Condeixa plus tôt que je ne le croyais. Le poste de Fonte Cuberta était découvert, et l'artillerie qui s'y trouvait compromise. J'ai gagné avec elle la grande route par une marche de flanc, à portée de canon de la ligne ennemie, par un beau clair de lune.'

[1] 'Le Maréchal Masséna crut voir dans ce mouvement opéré à son insu l'intention de le faire tomber, lui et son état-major, entre les mains de l'ennemi. Le Général Fririon chercha à lui faire entendre qu'il devait attribuer ce fait à un oubli plutôt qu'à un sentiment de malveillance. Mais il lui fut impossible de le persuader. "Cette conduite est inexcusable," lui dit Masséna; "le mouvement rétrograde de ces deux divisions était exécuté clandestinement; c'est un acte que rien ne peut justifier."' (Fririon, pp. 150–1.)

egress. This last was really not his to grant, for during the night Trant had removed everything from the city except a battalion of Militia and the two guns at the bridge. The sergeant in command of these pieces (a certain José Correia Leal, whose name the Portuguese have very properly preserved) adroitly wasted time by detaining the French officer. He told him that he must wait till an answer came from Trant, whose absence he kept concealed, and then, after some hours, said that his commander had gone to visit a distant point of the river defences, from which he would not be back till the next morning [1]. Meanwhile, if any attempt were made to attack the bridge, he had orders to blow up several more arches, which were mined. Time drifted on, and meanwhile Montbrun received at noon the news that Ney was forced to give up Condeixa [2], i. e. that there was no more prospect of using Coimbra as a crossing-point. Moreover his own retreat was in danger, if an English detachment should march straight from Condeixa towards the bridge, a distance of only eight miles. The French general was obliged to abscond, and the only route open to him, since the *chaussée* was lost, was a rough path which, after coasting along the south bank of the Mondego for some time, turns up into the valley of the Eça [3], and so reaches Miranda de Corvo. After blowing up many of his wheeled vehicles, Montbrun hastened to take this track, and escaped by it, though he was discovered and pursued by some of Wellington's cavalry patrols, who pressed his rear-guard and made many prisoners. But the division of dragoons, with the infantry battalion attached, and the two horse artillery batteries—their caissons had to be destroyed because of the badness of the road—ultimately reached Miranda with no great loss.

This was a truly important day, the most critical in the whole campaign, since at its end Coimbra was safe, and the whole

[1] For all this see Soriano da Luz, iii. pp. 360–1.

[2] According to Delagrave he got the news neither from Ney nor from an aide-de-camp of his own whom he had left with the 6th Corps to transmit information, but from an emissary of Masséna named Girod, who thought of him when the proper authorities failed to do so.

[3] Called the Deuça by Napier and other writers—an erroneous contraction of Rio de Eça.

French army had been turned on to the road towards Spain. Wellington was satisfied, and had no reason to be otherwise. The accusation made against him by many critics of over-caution, which is said to have prevented him from destroying Loison's and Montbrun's detachments, seems unjustifiable. The cardinal fact that he was not superior in numerical strength to the army that he was pursuing is too often forgotten; indeed, the French writers from Masséna down to to-day have nearly always credited him with 50,000 or 60,000 men, whereas he had barely 45,000, of whom only 32,000 were British, and the Portuguese were still in great part untried troops; for though those of them who had passed the test of battle (Pack's and Power's[1] brigades, the Caçadores in the Light Division, and the artillery) had done admirably hitherto, there were still four whole brigades which had never been in serious action since they were reorganized in 1809[2]. Nothing was to be risked, and partial attacks by unsupported vanguards were to be eschewed, when (as Wellington remarked in his dispatch of March 14) 'the whole country affords advantageous positions to a retreating army, of which the enemy has shown that he knows how to avail himself. They are leaving the country, as they entered it, in one solid mass, covering their rear on every march by one (or sometimes two) *corps d'armée*, in the successive positions which the country affords, which *corps d'armée* are closely supported by the rest.' A general action against equal or superior numbers ranged on a strong hill-position was clearly inadvisable, and the plan of manœuvring the enemy out of each line that he took up by a short flanking movement was infinitely preferable. Flanking movements take time, and unless the enemy is very slow or very rash, have effective rather than brilliant results. But Wellington never 'played to the gallery'; he was no vender of bulletins; he had a small army which it was difficult to reinforce, and he could not afford to waste his precious men in hazardous combats. It would have been of little profit to him if he had

[1] Late Champlemond's, heavily engaged against Reynier at Bussaco.

[2] viz. Ashworth's (late A. Campbell's), Spry's, Madden's (late Eben's), and Harvey's, of which the third had only one regiment engaged at Bussaco, and the others had been on parts of the line not attacked by the French.

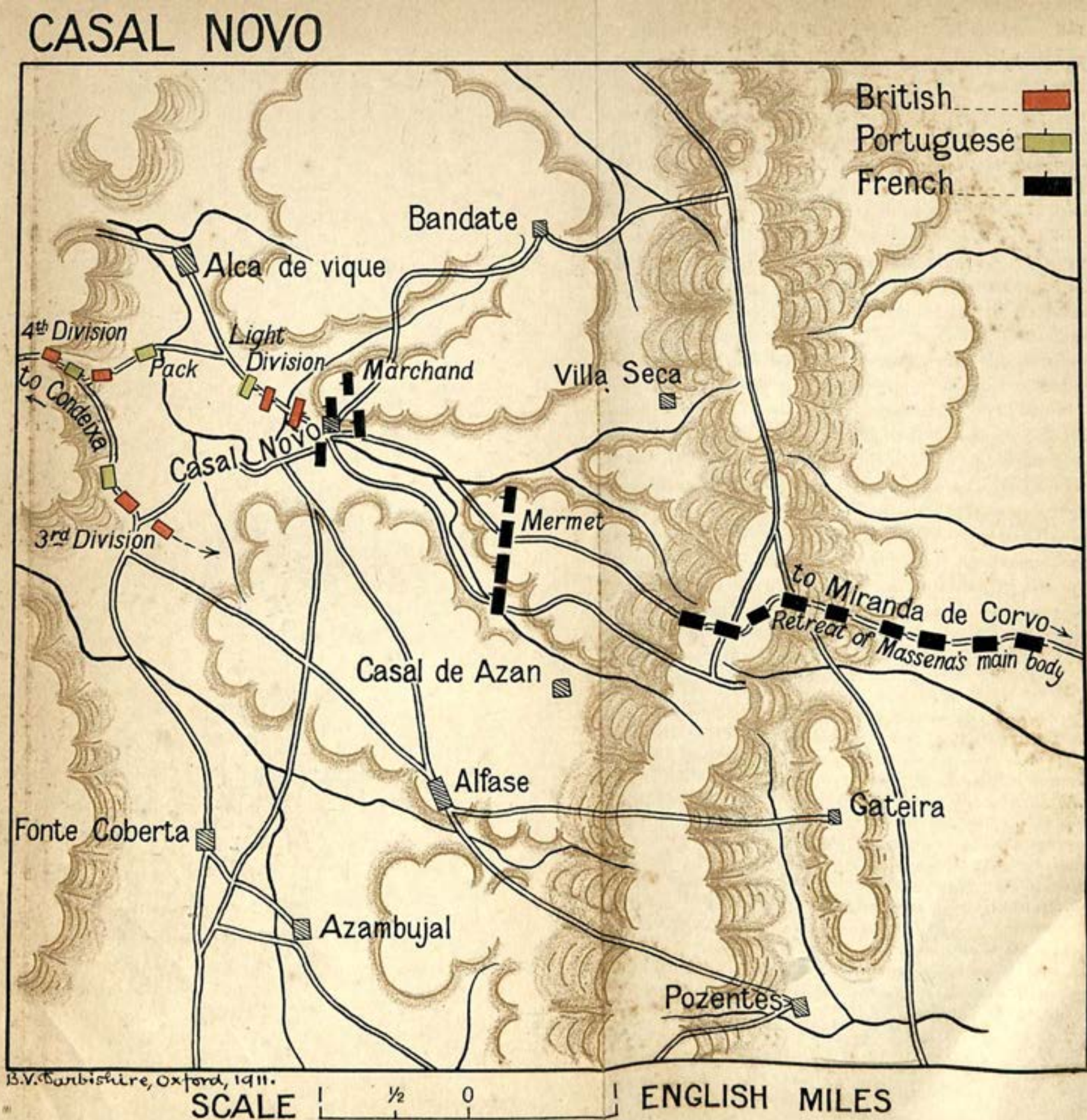
destroyed a division or two of the enemy, and had then arrived on the Spanish frontier with an army diminished by 10,000 men. The enemy had unlimited supports behind him; he had practically none. For when he had taken out his field army, and had detached Beresford to Estremadura, there were no regular troops left in Portugal save the newly formed 7th Division, which was coming up from Lisbon to join the main body.

That Wellington's system was sound was sufficiently proved by an incident of the next morning's march, when the army suffered the only check which it was destined to meet during the campaign, and lost more men than on any other day of this eventful month. At early dawn on the 14th there was a dense fog; notwithstanding this, Sir William Erskine, who was commanding the vanguard, composed of the Light Division, Pack's Portuguese, and Arentschildt's cavalry brigade, thought fit to march straight at the enemy, his orders of the preceding night being to stick to Ney's heels. The French rearguard, Marchand's division, was holding the village of Casal Novo[1], a strong post on a rising ground, surrounded with stone walls and enclosures, while the rest of the 6th and 8th Corps were defiling along the road to Chão de Lamas and Miranda de Corvo. The Light Division, heading the advancing column, ran into the pickets of the French, whereupon Erskine ordered out three companies of the 52nd and sent them forward to clear the way. They were soon heavily engaged, for Marchand was in force. When the fog lifted daylight showed the five battalions of the Light Division clubbed on the road, under the front of the enemy's line of a battery and eleven battalions, ranged on the height of Casal Novo. Pack's Portuguese and the 3rd Division were some distance off, coming along the defile which leads from Condeixa. The Light Division had to extend and fight hard in order to keep its ground, while the main body was coming up and developing a flanking movement against the French. It lost heavily of necessity, and was only released from a dangerous position by the movement of Picton and the 3rd Division to the right, which forced the French to abscond. Marchand's division then fell back behind

[1] I walked round Casal Novo on September 28, 1910. It is a very small place, under a low undulation of the high-lying plateau which the road crosses.

Mermet's, which was in position two miles to the rear, between the villages of Casal de Azan and Villa Seca[1]. This second position was properly turned, and carried without loss, if with some delay. Then the enemy was discovered in the afternoon in a third and still more formidable post, on the heights of Chão de Lamas. This was treated in the same fashion, the Light Division and Pack's Portuguese turning its left, Picton its right, while the main body, coming up from the rear, halted opposite its centre. Ney then gave up his position, and fell back six miles down hill, towards Miranda de Corvo on the banks of the Eça river, where the 8th Corps and Montbrun's cavalry were waiting for him. The pursuers, tired out by a running fight of twelve hours, during which they had gained fourteen miles of ground, halted in front of him. Their loss had been 11 officers and 119 men in the British, and 25 in the Portuguese ranks, a total of 155. More than half fell in the mismanaged business of the early morning, in which the 43rd, 52nd, and 95th lost 9 officers and over 80 men, in an utterly unnecessary combat. This was the first of two exhibitions of wrongheadedness by which the newly arrived general, William Erskine, lost Wellington's confidence. The second, on April 3rd, was (as we shall see) to be a still more discreditable affair. The French loss at Casal Novo and in the succeeding skirmishes of the day was apparently much smaller than that of the British, though the official figure of 55 killed

[1] There is a good account of the combat of Casal Novo in William Napier's *History*, iii. 119–20, and a still more striking one in his biography, pp. 55–7, containing some distressing anecdotes. He was severely wounded, as was also his brother George Napier of the 52nd, whose narrative is quite as interesting as William's. It is he who describes Erskine's reckless action best—informed by Colonel Ross that the French were still in Casal Novo 'he kept blustering and swearing it was all nonsense—that the captains of the pickets knew nothing about the matter, and that there was not a man in the village. Just as he spoke the dense fog began to clear, and bang came a shot from a twelve-pounder, which struck the head of our column and made a lane through it, killing and wounding many. Then came a regular cannonade, but the wise Sir William was sure it was but a single gun and a picket supporting it, and desired Colonel Ross to send my company against its flank,' &c. Costello of the 95th has also left a very good and lively narrative of the day's work.


CASAL NOVO
British
Portuguese
French
Bandate
Alca de vique
4th Division
Light Division
Pack
Marchand
Villa Seca
to Condeixa
Casal Novo
Mermet
3rd Division
to Miranda de Corvo
Retreat of Massena's main body
Casal de Azan
Alfase
Gateira
Fonte Coberta
Azambujal
Pozentes
B.V. Darbishire, Oxford, 1911.
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and wounded seems very low [1]. On this morning the British, for the first time during the retreat, began to take prisoners on a considerable scale; there were more than 100 captured between Casal Novo and Miranda de Corvo, partly skirmishers cut off during the long bickering in woods and enclosures which filled the day, partly stragglers and marauders, who were taken in the country-side while wandering away from their colours.

On this evening Reynier and the 2nd Corps, so long divided from the rest of the French army, joined the main column. From March 10th to March 13th they had lain at Espinhal, resting after the difficult passage of the mountains, and endeavouring, without much success, to scrape together food to fill their depleted stores. Being closely observed, though not attacked, by Nightingale's brigade, they could not scatter very far for marauding. But on the 14th Wellington, during the Casal Novo fighting, threw out Cole's 4th Division far to his right to Penella, where it got into touch with Nightingale. Seeing that there was now a serious force in front of Reynier, and that it might thrust itself between him and the rest of the army, Masséna bade his

[1] The losses of the 14th (Casal Novo) and the 15th (Foz do Arouce) have unfortunately got mixed in Martinien's invaluable casualty lists, most of them being credited to the 14th, with the wrong heading 'Condeixa'—which appears to mean Casal Novo. In some regiments the dates and names have not got wrong, e. g. we know that on the 14th the 27th regiment had 3 officers wounded, and 3 more at Foz do Arouce on the following day. But e. g. in the 39th Ligne Colonel Lamour is down as 'blessé le 14 mars à Condeixa,' while he was certainly wounded at Foz do Arouce on the 15th, where he was also taken prisoner. The total of officers recorded as hit in the 6th Corps on the 14th–15th is 22, of whom 10 were certainly casualties of the 14th. This must surely imply more than 55 in all, killed and wounded. At the low rate of 10 men per officer it would give 100—at the normal rate of 20 per officer it would be 200. But the last is probably too high. It was on this day that Marbot had his famous encounter with a rifle officer (*officier de chasseurs à pied*) and two hussars, of whom (according to his narrative) he slew the first and wounded the other two. It cannot be disputed that he had a fight, for he is down as wounded in the official lists. But he certainly did not kill a rifle officer. The only light division officer slain that day was Lieutenant Gifford, who was killed by a ball in the head at Casal Novo. It is also to be noted that there are no cavalry casualties in the return of March 14, or indeed since Redinha. Marbot's supposed victims thus disappear!

lieutenant break up without delay, and come in to Miranda de Corvo. This was easily done by a ten-mile march in the afternoon, and the 2nd Corps camped on the further side of the Eça river that night. Thus the whole French army, save Conroux's division, was concentrated, and 44,000 men under arms, dragging behind them a baggage-train that was still considerable, and over 5,000 sick and wounded, were gathered in the defile and the little plain north of it, with a most forbidding mountain range in their front, and the pursuing columns of Wellington in their rear.

The situation appeared so grave to Masséna that he resolved to lighten his army so far as was possible, in order to allow it to march faster. On this night there was a general destruction not only of all wheeled vehicles, save a minimum of ammunition waggons, but of all the baggage of the army, regimental as well as personal. Ney set the example by burning his own carriages, and abandoning all that could not be carried on pack mules[1]. The sick and wounded were transferred from waggons on to beasts of burden—a change which caused the death or abandonment of many hundreds of them during the next two days. A strict inspection was made of all the surviving draught and pack animals, and when those still in a fair state had been set aside for the carriage of the sick and the ammunition, an order was issued that all the rest should be put to death. To avoid the noise which would have been caused by shooting them, the officer charged with this duty caused them all to be hamstrung, a cruel device which was surely unnecessary, for they could have been killed as easily as mutilated by the sword or knife. The horrid sight of more than 500 live horses, mules, and asses sprawling or hobbling in a bleeding mass, just outside the village of Miranda de Corvo, was never forgotten by those who witnessed it[2] in the pursuit of the following morning.

[1] For details see the diary of Ney's aide-de-camp Sprünglin (p. 470). It is astounding to find Masséna in his dispatch of March 19 to Berthier stating that between Miranda de Corvo and Foz do Arouce 'nos équipages et nos malades ne cessaient pas de filer, et rien absolument n'est resté en arrière.'

[2] 'The most disgusting sight was the asses floundering in the mud, some with throats half cut, the rest barbarously houghed. What the object of this was I never could guess. The poor brutes could have been

The sacrifice of the baggage was the preliminary to a desperate and fatiguing night march. The 2nd Corps started off first, then the 8th, leaving the 6th as usual to bring up the rear. After firing Miranda de Corvo, in order that the conflagration in the narrow street leading up from the bridge might delay the advance of the Allies, Ney followed the rest of the army at one in the morning. All marched slowly in the dark for ten miles of an uphill road, and before noon reached the long descent into the valley of the Ceira, at the village of Foz do Arouce [1]. The 2nd and 8th Corps crossed the stream with much delay, at a bridge which had been somewhat injured by the local Ordenança but was still serviceable. They deployed on a range of commanding heights on the further side, and encamped. Ney, always eager to carry on the detaining process which he had hitherto practised with such skill, only sent three of his six brigades across the river [2], though Masséna had ordered him to pass, and to destroy the bridge. He remained with the rest and Lamotte's light cavalry, posted on two long hills with the village of Foz between them, on the hither side of the water. Though he had a good position, yet the defile to the rear was a dangerous thing for such a large body of troops, since the Ceira was in

of no use to us, for they could not have travelled another league. Their meagre appearance, with backbones and hips protruding through their skin, and their mangled limbs, produced a feeling of disgust and commiseration.' (Grattan, p. 58.)

'It was pitiable to see the poor creatures in this state, yet there was something ludicrous in the position which many had taken when thus cruelly lamed. They were sitting in groups upon their hinder ends, staring in each other's faces, as if in deep consultation on some important subject.' (Donaldson of the 94th, p. 106.)

[1] Napier calls the village Foz de Aronce, and this spelling of it (probably caused by an uncorrected printer's error) has been perpetuated by every English writer on the War. Yet Wellington has it rightly spelt with the 'u' in his dispatch (vii. p. 370) as 'Foz de Arouce.' Masséna, in his, calls it Foz d'Arunce, which is incorrect. Delagrave, Fririon, and other French narrators follow him, sometimes with the variants Aronce or Arounce. There is no doubt that the name is spelt with a 'u,' and always has been, by the Portuguese.

[2] All Marchand's division and a brigade of Mermet's (25th Léger and 27th Ligne) remained behind. Only Labassée's brigade of Mermet's division crossed the water, with Loison's division.

flood, and every man had to retire over the single damaged bridge. Moreover the troops, tired by the night march, guarded themselves badly; in especial the cavalry, which ought to have watched every road, with vedettes out for many miles to the front, huddled together near the river for the convenience of water and grazing: General Lamotte indeed crossed the Ceira with great part of his men, and seems to have kept no look-out whatever[1].

Wellington's pursuit this morning started very late. The burning of the French baggage and of the town of Miranda had been noted in the last hours of the night. But at dawn a heavy fog arose, and Wellington refused to move his masses till it was certain that the French were not still in position on the heights beyond the river with all their 44,000 men. For if Masséna were seeking a battle, as was quite possible, now that he had concentrated all his three corps, it would be reckless to attack him when every man of the allied army had to file over a narrow bridge. It was not till reconnaissances had pushed across the Eça, and had explored the burning town, and the ground beyond for some miles, that orders were issued for the army to march on. Even then the fog had not lifted, and the morning was some hours old before the 3rd and Light Divisions were on their way. They followed the retreating French up the long ascent, picking up many sick and stragglers, and at about four o'clock in the afternoon came in sight of the enemy in their new position behind the Ceira, with a formidable front extending for several miles along the hills, and Ney's rearguard visible on the lower eminences on the hither side of the stream. Picton and Erskine halted, thinking that it was too late in the afternoon to undertake a serious attack, and that Wellington would wait, as usual, for his supports to come up. They had directed their divisions to encamp and thrown out their pickets, when the Commander-in-Chief rode up, not long before dusk.

[1] I studied the ground at Foz do Arouce on September 28, 1910. The bridge is only four and a half yards broad, and 107 long. It was approached in 1811 by the road in a sharp turn, which has now been straightened out, so was far more difficult to cross than it is now. The gap between the hills in which the village lies is about 200 yards broad. The heights on the French left are much higher than those on their right.

Surveying the enemy, and seeing that few battalions were under arms, and that Ney was evidently expecting no fighting—his cavalry indeed had given him no proper warning of the approach of the Allies—Wellington resolved to strike at once, though his nearest reserve, the 6th Division, was still some way off. Picton was told to attack the French left, the Light Division their right. The first blow was very effective and partook of the nature of a surprise, for the enemy was caught unprepared. Some companies of the 95th Rifles, penetrating down a hollow road, arrived almost unopposed in the village of Foz, quite close to the bridge, while the rest of the Light Division was holding Marchand's troops engaged in a frontal fight, and Picton was making good way against the brigade belonging to Mermet, which formed the French left. The noise of close combat breaking out almost in their rear, at a spot which seemed to indicate that the bridge was in danger, and their retreat cut off, caused a panic in the French right-centre, and the 39th regiment broke its ranks and hurried towards the bridge, where it met and became jammed against Lamotte's cavalry, who were hastily returning to take up the position from which they had unwisely retired an hour or two before. Finding the passage impossible, the fugitives turned to a deep ford a little downstream and plunged into it, where many were drowned and the regimental eagle was lost [1], while their colonel was taken prisoner. Ney saved the situation, which had arisen through his own disobedience to Masséna's orders, by charging, with the third battalion of the 69th regiment [2] the rifle companies which had got into Foz do Arouce and were threatening the bridge. They were driven back on to their support, the 52nd regiment, and the passage having been cleared by the Marshal's exertions, the troops to the left and right crossed it in some disorder, and took refuge on the opposite bank. They were shelled during

[1] It was found in the river at low water and sent to London. The loss is mentioned in George Simmons's diary under March 16. Wellington sent it home in July. (*Dispatches*, viii. p. 78.)

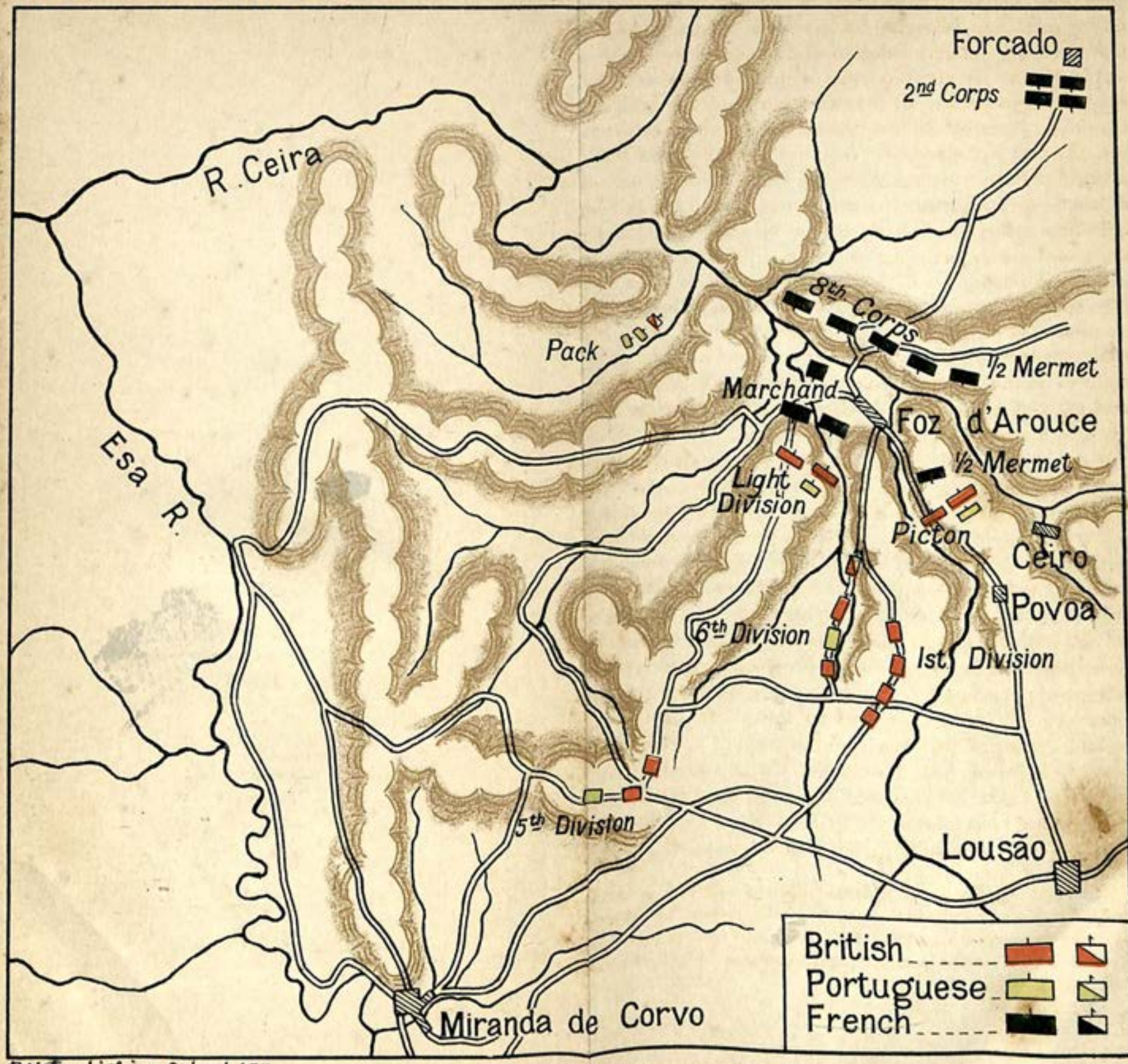
[2] So both Masséna's dispatch, and Fririon, who was present with the brigade of which the 69th formed part. Marbot is wrong in saying that it was the 27th. All the narratives on the French side are very confused, and differ widely.

their defile, not only by Ross's and Bull's horse artillery batteries, but by some guns belonging to their own 8th Corps, which in the deepening twilight failed to distinguish between pursuers and pursued. By the time that night had fully set in, the French rearguard was all over the river, and the bridge was blown up. If the attack had been delivered an hour earlier, it is probable that Ney would have suffered losses far greater than he actually endured—perhaps 250[1] men killed, wounded, drowned, or taken—for the British divisions were prevented by the failing light from acting as effectively as they otherwise might against the masses hastily recrossing the bridge. Wellington's loss was trifling—4 officers and 67 men, nearly a third of them in the rifle companies which had broken the French centre for a moment, and had then been driven back by Ney. The small remainder of the baggage of Marchand and Mermet was captured on this occasion, including some biscuit, which proved most grateful to the Light Division, as it had, like the rest of the British army, outmarched its transport.

It may not be out of place to note that the combat of Foz do Arouce bore a singular resemblance to Craufurd's combat on the Coa of July 24, 1810. In each case a rearguard was tempted to stay too long beyond an unfordable river and a narrow bridge, by the defensible nature of the position in which it found itself, and nearly suffered a complete disaster. The only difference was that Ney had at least double as strong a force as Craufurd, and had also a whole army in line beyond the river to support him, while the British general had no reserves near. In each case the endangered detachment got away by dint of hard fighting, with appreciable but by no means crushing losses. It is curious that the tables were exactly turned between pursuer and pursued in these two fights—in 1810 it was Ney who by a sudden assault hustled the Light Division over the Coa. In 1811 the Light Division was at the head of the striking force which thrust Ney over the Ceira. If Craufurd had been in command instead of

[1] Sprünglin says 400, Masséna, in his dispatch to Berthier, under 200, Marbot 150, *Victoires et Conquêtes* 400. Sprünglin, as Ney's aide-de-camp, had the best chance of knowing. But Martinien's lists, in which I can only find ten or twelve casualties among officers, suggest a smaller total, roughly perhaps 250.

FOZ D'AROUCE



B.V. Barbishire, Oxford, 1911.

SCALE ½ 0 ENGLISH MILES

the incapable Erskine, there can be little doubt that the matter would have been pushed to a more decisive conclusion, despite of the dusk.

On the morning of March 16th, the hills beyond the Ceira, where a whole army had been visible on the preceding day, were now seen to be almost void of defenders—only a trifling rear-guard was visible watching the broken bridge from a distance. Wellington sent scouts over the river to reconnoitre, but did not cross it in force. He had accomplished his main design of thrusting the French off the Coimbra road and into the mountains, and he had entirely outmarched his provisions. He had now got so far from his base at Lisbon that food sent up from thence had far to travel, and he had not yet succeeded in setting up an intermediate dépôt at Coimbra, though store-ships were already ordered from Lisbon to its port of Figueira[1], now that there was no danger of the enemy crossing the lower Mondego. During the last week the army had used up all that it carried with it, and the Portuguese brigades, badly supplied by the native commissariat, had run short even before the British. Pack's and Ashworth's men had received no regular rations for four days[2], and had only kept up to the front by gleaning in the deserted bivouacs of the French, and borrowing the little that the British commissariat could spare. Everything had run dry by the 16th, and Wellington considered that no great harm would be suffered by waiting a day on the Ceira, for the first convoy to come up from the rear, since the French were now in rugged ground, where they could not make any long attempt to stand for sheer want of food. They must continue their retreat or starve in a depopulated country. Accordingly Wellington settled down at Lousão and took stock of the general position of affairs: the result of his halt was an immense discharge of arrears of correspondence—he had written only one dispatch between the 10th and 16th of March, but got off seventeen on

[1] See *Dispatches*, vii. p. 366.

[2] There is a bitter letter from Pack of March 21st in his *Memoirs* concerning the 'bad commissariat and worse medical establishment of an inefficient and penniless government which no officer can serve with pleasure or advantage,' which quite bears out Wellington, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 371.

the last-named day. Some of these are very important, as showing that he regarded the crisis as over, and the ultimate evacuation of Portugal by the French as certain. The most notable are two orders to Beresford [1], making over to him once more the 4th Division and De Grey's heavy dragoons for the expedition into Estremadura, which now had as its object not the relief of Badajoz (whose capitulation was known) but the holding back of Soult from Campo Mayor and Elvas.

It will be remembered that the 2nd Division and Hamilton's Portuguese had been left behind near Abrantes when Wellington determined, on March 9th, not to send an expedition against Soult, till he could make it up to a force sufficient to cope with the army that was beleaguering Badajoz. They were not to commit themselves to any offensive operations, or to cross the Portuguese frontier, till the reinforcements arrived, but were to move a stage on their way toward the south. Accordingly the head quarters of the 2nd Division were at Tramagal on the 14th, with its attached cavalry (the 13th Light Dragoons) at Crato in advance, while the Portuguese horse of Otway had been sent to watch the roads to Elvas by Portalegre and Estremoz. Here there was a halt for a week, Beresford being absent with Wellington for five days, and it was not till the 17th that the movement towards Estremadura began again, on his return. Meanwhile Masséna, oddly enough, knowing of the existence of a considerable allied force at Abrantes, and not feeling it on his own flank, formed a theory that it must have been sent in a long sweep up by the Zezere, to drop into the upper Mondego valley and cut him off from Spain. Nervousness as to this imaginary movement had no small effect on his main operations [2].

[1] Wellington had called Beresford up to him on May 9th, and the latter was present at Pombal and Redinha. He rode hastily back to pick up his forces, which were to form the Army of Estremadura, on the 16th and reached Thomar on the 17th March.

[2] Masséna to Berthier, from Maceira, March 19: 'D'après les rapports, le général Hill [he means Beresford, who had been in charge of Hill's former command since December] se portait avec sa division et un gros détachement de Portugais à travers les montagnes du haut Zézère, se dirigeant sur la rive gauche du Mondégo. Dès ce moment j'ai abandonné l'espoir de garder cette rive sans risquer une bataille.' . . . 'Dans l'état actuel des choses et d'après les mouvements que l'ennemi peut faire sur

By sending off Cole and De Grey to join the future Army of Estremadura, on the 16th March, Wellington reduced the force about him by 7,000 men, and had no more than 38,000 left on the Ceira. The newly formed 7th Division, which was marching up from Lisbon, and would ultimately replace Cole with the main army, was at this moment only reaching Santarem; it did not come up to the front till March was at its end. For the rest of his operations against Masséna, therefore, Wellington was more than ever in a state of numerical inferiority, and forced to be cautious. But he was in a confident mood, foreseeing that the enemy could not now stop in Portugal, and must be starved into a prompt retreat over the frontier.

His conviction that the crisis was over is shown by another dispatch of the 20th March, in which he directs that the whole of the Lisbon Militia and Ordenança be dismissed to their homes, the former on furlough, the latter for good. The Militia of the lower Beira (the Castello Branco country) and of northern Estremadura were also to return to their native districts, to be sent on leave or kept under arms according as further events might determine[1]. Thus the Lines of Torres Vedras were left ungarrisoned, there being no further danger to be feared in the direction of Lisbon.

There was still much work, however, for the Militia of the North, Trant's and Wilson's brigades, who were brought down to the middle Mondego, and sent successively to Peña Cova, Mortagoa, and Fornos, to guard the fords and restrain the French from endeavouring to raid the north bank of the river. It was unlikely that they would make a serious attempt to cross in force into the barren country under the Serra de Alcoba, when they were in such a desperate plight for food, and would have the allied army close behind them, for the troops were to march again on the 17th. The middle Mondego, it must be remembered, was bridgeless, and in flood from the spring rains: even if Masséna had driven off Trant and Wilson, it would have taken him a long time to build a bridge (since he had no pontoons)

mes flancs, par le Mondégo ou par les montagnes de Guarda, où s'est dirigé le corps de Hill, il est nécessaire de rapprocher l'armée de notre base d'opérations' [i. e. to retreat into Spain].

[1] Wellington to Beresford. (*Dispatches*, vii. 375-6.)

and Wellington would have been pressing him in the rear before he had got more than a vanguard over the water. The Marshal seems never to have contemplated at this date a movement on to Coimbra or Oporto by the north bank of the Mondego, such as is suggested as possible by some of the commentators on the campaign: after the day of Condeixa a retreat eastward was always in his mind[1]. His army was too dilapidated to make the least offensive stroke. 'I think it necessary for the interests of his Imperial majesty,' wrote Masséna on the 19th, 'to bring the troops back nearer to our base of operations by our fortresses [Almeida and Rodrigo], in order to let them recover a little from their fatigues and long privations, and to allow me to replace so much equipment which is now entirely lacking[2].'

On the 16th, the day after the combat of Foz do Arouce, the 2nd and 8th Corps marched before dawn, in drenching rain, and retired as far as the Alva river, where the bridge of Ponte de Murcella, repaired for a moment by Drouet when he passed it a few days before, had again been broken by Wilson's Militia. It took all the day to repair it, and by the evening only the artillery had been sent across. The divisions of Mermet and Loison followed at a distance, leaving behind the much-tried battalions of Marchand, which Ney had once more chosen to form his rearguard. He drew them up across the road a few miles from the Ceira, expecting to be attacked once more in the morning. But to his surprise Wellington did not cross the river, and only sent a few scouts to discover the position of the Marshal. Meanwhile his engineers mended the bridge at Foz.

On the 17th, at dawn, Masséna sent the 8th Corps across the repaired bridge of Ponte de Murcella, after which it halted at

[1] 'Rien ne nous empêchait,' says Masséna's biographer Koch, 'de passer à gué le Mondégo, et de nous rendre maîtres de la Sierra de Alcoba, d'où nous menacerions Coïmbre et toute la contrée comprise entre le Mondégo, le Duero et la mer.' But there *was* a hindrance—or rather three hindrances—the Mondego was not fordable at the moment, and what was more important, the starving army could not have lived on the country-side north of the Mondego. Moreover the passage of the Mondego with a lively enemy at his heels would have been too dangerous for Masséna, who had already refused to accept such conditions on the day of Condeixa.

[2] From Masséna's dispatch to Berthier, March 19.

Cortiça, Moita, and other villages beyond the Alva river, whose passage it was prepared to defend. But the 2nd Corps was marched up-stream to Sarzedo, the next ford, and placed there in position, with a detachment beyond the river at the town of Arganil on its south bank. The 6th Corps, following the other two, crossed the Alva at Ponte de Murcella later in the day, and joined the 8th; it left a small detachment beyond the bridge to observe the expected arrival of the Allies. Of the horsemen, Montbrun's heavy dragoons watched the lower course of the Alva, from Ponte de Murcella to its junction with the Mondego, while Junot's corps-cavalry was sent up the Alva eastward, to hold the fords beyond Arganil.

These dispositions seemed to indicate an intention to make a serious stand behind the Alva, where the positions are very strong. The river is a fierce mountain torrent in a deep bed, with precipitous banks, and very few fords. Wellington had fixed on this line, during the Bussaco campaign in the preceding autumn, as the position where he should await the French if they advanced by the south bank of the Mondego, and had thrown up earthworks on each side of the Ponte de Murcella. These were, of course, useless to Masséna, since they looked the wrong way; but the river line was almost as defensible from the north bank as from the south, and presented a very formidable obstacle to the pursuing enemy.

By the evening of the 17th Wellington was once more in touch with the enemy. The cavalry brigades of Slade and Arentschildt had crossed the bridge of Foz do Arouce, and followed the 6th Corps to the Alva, with the 6th and Light Divisions behind them. The infantry, however, did not show themselves, but encamped in the hills, some miles from the Ponte de Murcella. They found the road strewn with dead or dying mules and horses, and took a certain number of French sick and stragglers.

But Wellington had no intention of forcing the Ponte de Murcella position; while two divisions took this road, the rest of the army (1st, 3rd, 5th Divisions, and the Portuguese independent brigades) were marched eastward by the steep road along the top of the watershed between the Ceira and the Alva, the route Furcado–Arganil, towards the fords of the upper

Alva. They drove out of the last-named place Reynier's observing detachment, which reported that it had seen the Allies in great force marching up-stream. This news convinced Masséna that his adversary was intending either to cross the ford of Sarzedo and attack Reynier, or to move still further up the valley, and to pass the Alva in its upper course, so throwing himself across the main road to Celorico, by which the Army of Portugal was intending to retreat. Nothing but cavalry scouts having been seen opposite the Ponte de Murcella, it was supposed that Wellington's whole army was marching on Arganil.

Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 17th, Masséna ordered the 8th Corps to break up hastily from its camps and to march all night to Galliges, on the high road beyond Reynier's left. This was done, and Junot hurried off, leaving hundreds of foragers scattered on the slopes towards the Mondego, whither they had been sent out in search of food during the day. Ney remained behind at the Ponte de Murcella, to keep the passage as long as possible; he was uncertain, as was Masséna, whether there was in his front only a cavalry screen or a serious force of all arms.

On the morning of the 18th this problem was solved, for the Light Division came down to the river, drove Ney's rearguard across it, and opened a cannonade against the troops of the 6th Corps visible on the opposite bank. No serious attempt was made to pass, the intention being only to hold Ney to his ground as long as possible by demonstrations, while the real crossing was made far up-stream. This plan had the desired result. In the afternoon Ney received the news that the Allies had begun to cross the Alva at the ford of Pombeiro, from which they had driven off one of Reynier's battalions. If any considerable force got over the river at this point, the 6th Corps was cut off from the rest of the army; accordingly the Marshal ordered his three divisions to march off without a moment's delay; 'I never saw *Johnny* go off in such confusion,' says a Light Division diarist [1]. The cavalry brigade of Arentschildt sent out reconnoitring parties, who forded the river, while the engineers rigged up a temporary wooden bridge close to the Ponte de Mur-

[1] Diary of George Simmons of the 95th, p. 146.

cella [1], by which the 6th and Light Divisions were able to cross at dawn on the following day.

On the left the decisive crossing at Pombeiro had been made by the Guards' brigade of the 1st Division [2]: Reynier made no attempt to support the single battalion at the ford, but called it in, and drew up in battle order on the Serra de Moita some distance above the river. There was no fighting here, and after dusk the 2nd Corps decamped, taking the road Galliges–Chamusca–Gouvea–Celorico, which runs parallel to and above the Alva; the 6th Corps fell in behind the 2nd; the 8th, which had already got further to the east during the march of the preceding night, led the column and was beyond Galliges in the afternoon [3].

On the night of the 18th–19th and the following morning the whole French army made a most protracted and fatiguing march, which cost them many stragglers and much material. This was the longest stage which Masséna made during the whole retreat, more than twenty miles of mountain road being covered in one stretch. On the evening of the 19th the head of the 8th Corps was at Pinhanços, that of the 2nd at Caragoça and Sandomil, that of the 6th at Chamusca. The British cavalry in pursuit picked up an immense number of prisoners this day, mainly small parties of foragers belonging to the 6th and 8th Corps, who had been marauding in the direction of the Mondego when their regiments received sudden orders to march: they returned towards their camps to fall into the hands of the British cavalry. Arentschildt's brigade alone took 200 this day [4], and the total according to Wellington's dispatch was 600 men [5]. Among them were an aide-de-camp of Loison's and several other

[1] Napier says, 'by an ingenious raft contrived by the staff-corps' (iii. 126), but Tomkinson of the 16th Light Dragoons and Simmons speak of a wooden bridge.

[2] So the diary of Captain Stothert of the 3rd Guards, p. 250. He puts the crossing later in the afternoon than the French sources, but the whole 1st Division was across by dark. Several French critics (e. g. Delagrave) blame Reynier for not stopping the small force that first crossed.

[3] These movements are best given in Fririon's diary: Sprünglin gives some help for the 6th Corps.

[4] Tomkinson's diary, p. 87.

[5] *Dispatches*, vii. p. 375.

officers. Some droves of oxen were captured from the foragers and from the rear of the 6th Corps, and this was the only food which the British vanguard got that day, for once more, as several diarists ruefully note, 'biscuit was out.' The pursuers state that 'quantities of tumbrils, carts, waggons and other articles were abandoned by the enemy'[1], and no doubt were right, though Masséna wrote that evening from Maceira, 'Nous n'avons pas laissé en arrière un malade, un blessé, ni la moindre voiture d'artillerie ou de bagages'[2]. But his dispatches frequently contained what he knew that Napoleon would desire to see rather than the truth. Considering the difficulties of the retreat, and the skilful way in which he had conducted it, he might have been contented with his actual achievements, and need not have padded out his reports with 'terminological inexactitudes'. It must be confessed that his aide-de-camp Fririon played a good second to him when he wrote in his journal that between the 15th and 31st of March the Army of Portugal left behind only twenty prisoners and fifty men lost while marauding[3].

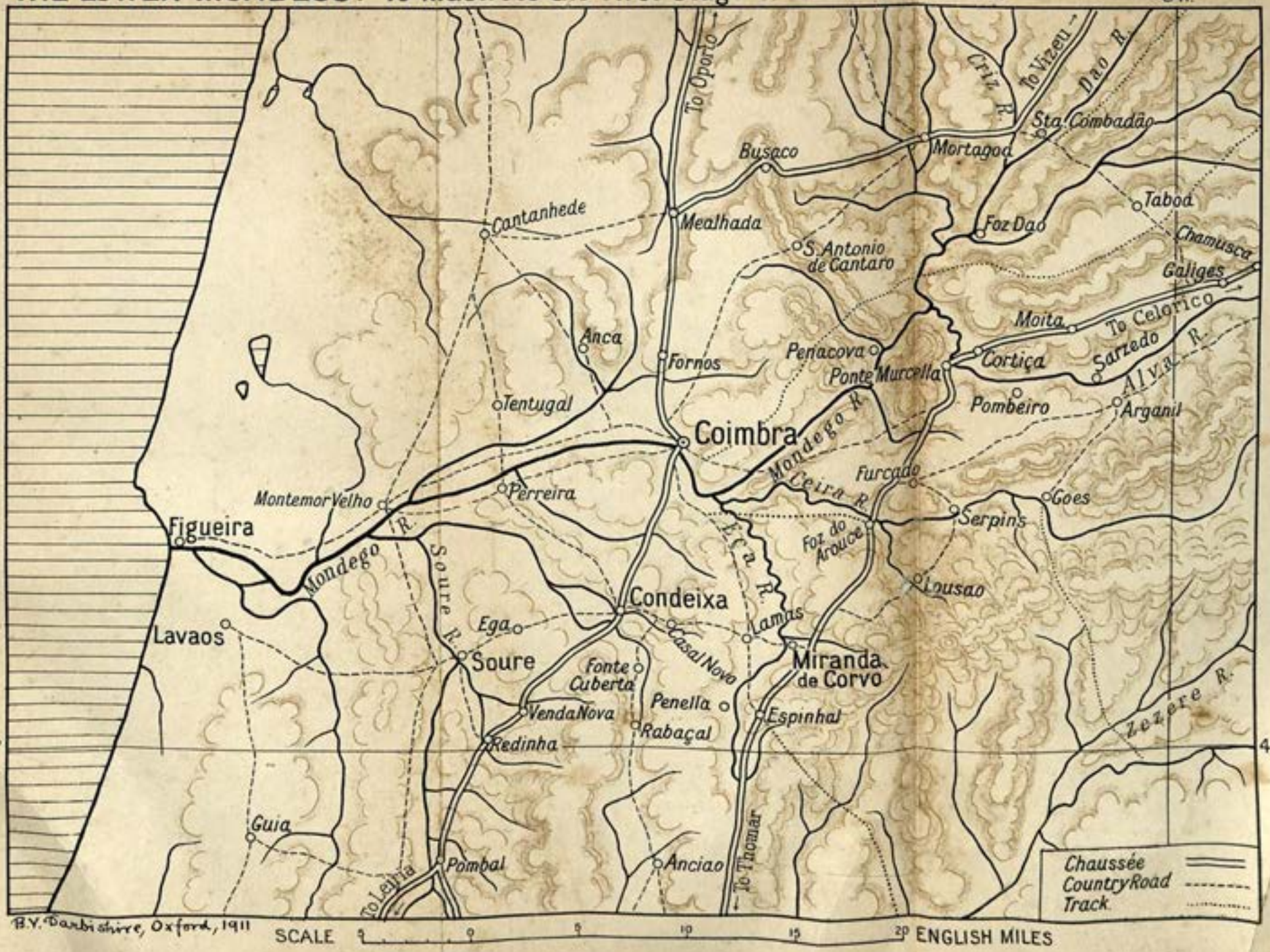
On the morning of the 20th March Wellington's army was all across the Alva, but only the cavalry and the Light, 3rd, and 6th Divisions continued the pursuit. The small convoy received on the 17th was exhausted, and what little food remained was made over to the three divisions named above, while the 1st, 5th, and Pack's and Ashworth's Portuguese halted for five days at Moita and the neighbouring villages, till the first train of provisions sent up from Coimbra should arrive. Of the troops which could still be fed, the Light Division pushed on as far as Galliges that night, the 3rd and 6th were behind them. The French, thanks to their desperate night march, were already a long way ahead, and it was late on the 20th before the cavalry overtook, near Cea, their extreme rearguard, two battalions of Heudelet's division and a hussar regiment. General Slade, whose brigade was leading, refused to attack them until infantry and guns came up to his aid, and the French slipped away before

[1] Simmons's diary, p. 148.

[2] Masséna to Berthier, from Maceira, March 19th.

[3] Fririon's *Campagne de Portugal*, p. 176.

THE LOWER MONDEGO. To illustrate the First Stage of Massena's Retreat



Elder's Caçadores and Bull's battery reached him [1]. 'This was the second day without bread, and the third without corn for the horses, and we had marched nearly five leagues,' explains a cavalry diarist [2]. The pursuers were as harassed as the pursued, and could go no further, but Slade was thought to have shown weakness. He picked up a good many stragglers and sick, and found the road strewn with broken vehicles and dying mules.

Meanwhile Masséna had divided his army into two columns at the fork of the roads near Maceira. The 2nd Corps, taking, on the right hand, the southern and more hilly route, reached Gouvea. The 8th Corps, taking the northern fork, got to Villacortes, and sent its cavalry on ahead to the bridge of Fornos, which they found broken and guarded by Trant's Militia. The 6th Corps, following the 8th, lay at Pinhanços. Since leaving the Ponte de Murcella the French were a little less pressed for food: the district through which they were now passing was fertile, and had not been raided before; most of the peasantry had returned to it during the winter. Hasty plundering on both sides of the road brought in a certain amount of food, especially in the way of cattle, which had been sent up into the hills, but were often discovered by skilled marauders. There was continual bickering with the Ordenança, one party of whom, only 300 strong, tried, with more courage than discretion, to defend the village of Penalva against the advanced guard of the 2nd Corps. All along the road the pursuing Light Division found the dead bodies of peasantry, mixed with those of the French sick who had fallen by the way.

On the 21st the 8th Corps reached Celorico, where Drouet was found in position with Conroux's division of the 9th Corps. The 6th Corps reached Carapichina and Cortiça. The 2nd, turning off at Villacortes on the Guarda road, had a most distressing mountain march to Villamonte. The pursuing infantry of the Light and 3rd Divisions reached Pinhanços and Maceira, with the cavalry five miles in front, at the convent of Vinho. They had now dropped fifteen miles behind the French rear, and were

[1] According to Fririon's diary the H.A. guns arrived in time to shell the rear battalion and kill one officer.

[2] Tomkinson, p. 87: 'Every one talked loudly of Slade's conduct through the day.'

quite out of touch with it, but continued to pick up stragglers —200 men are said to have been taken on that day[1]. Like the enemy, they were now commencing to get a little food from the country. 'The peasants, who had all fled to the mountains on the enemy's retreat, on seeing us come down, baked bread for the troops, and gave us whatever they had left. They had suffered a good deal, all the principal houses had been burnt, and those left a good deal destroyed, but the [French] troops had not been able to discover all the corn, &c., concealed[2].'

On the 22nd the French army had reached the end of the main retreat. Two corps were concentrated in and near Celorico[3], the other (Reynier) reached Guarda, where it found Claparéde's division of Drouet's corps, which had been there for some weeks. They were now only three marches from Almeida and four from Ciudad Rodrigo; communication with these two places was open, for Drouet and the 9th Corps had now come into touch again with the Commander-in-Chief, and were available for keeping the roads safe. The English had been outmarched, and Masséna might have retired to Almeida and Rodrigo practically unmolested, by a good *chaussée*. But this was not to be the end of the campaign, as every one in the French army, save its Commander-in-Chief, fervently desired. For generals and rank and file alike were tired out, and yearned for a cessation of mountain marches, and a rest in well-provisioned cantonments, before they should be called upon for another effort. But another and a most unexpected episode was to take place before the weary columns reached Rodrigo. Masséna made one more attempt to 'save his face,' and to avoid being thrust over the Spanish frontier, along the road on to which his adversary had forced him. This led to a fortnight more of manœuvres in the mountains, and to the combats of Guarda and Sabugal, after which the French Marshal had to pocket his pride and acquiesce in the inevitable. These operations are of a character so different from those which preceded them that

[1] Simmons of the 95th, diary, p. 148.

[2] Tomkinson's diary, p. 88.

[3] Ney remained quiet at Cortiço and Carapichina this day, but was only ten miles from Celorico, and so may be considered as part of the same body as the 8th Corps.

they must be treated as a separate story. The retreat from Santarem really ended at Celorico. The events between March 22nd and April 4th must be dealt with apart, since they practically amounted to a belated attempt on the part of Masséna to seize the offensive once more, and to shift the scene of war without his adversary's consent. The project failed, and (as we shall see) was hopeless from the first.

Before dealing with it, a few remarks on the general character of the operations that had taken place between March 9th and March 22nd must be made. When reading in succession two narratives of Masséna's retreat from Santarem to Celorico, one by an English and one by a French eye-witness, it is often difficult to realize that the two writers are describing the same series of operations. Most of the French conceive the retreat to have been a series of triumphant rearguard actions, in which their army got off practically unmolested, under cover of the skilful operations of a small covering force. On the other hand, the English tell the tale as if the whole French army was easily hunted out of Portugal by inferior numbers, foiled in repeated attempts to occupy a permanent position in the valley of the Mondego, and finally thrust back in a direction which it did not intend to take. Where the French tell of nothing but an orderly retreat and small losses, the English speak of the capture of hundreds of prisoners, and the destruction of the whole baggage-train of the retiring army.

To a certain extent the mental attitudes of both sets of narrators can be understood and justified by the impartial student. When a rearguard action takes place, the covering force left behind by the retiring army always thinks of itself as being opposed to the whole pursuing host. It considers itself to be braving the assault of immensely superior forces, and if it holds its own for a time and gets off without crushing losses, is well satisfied with its own conduct. This is both justifiable and comprehensible. But to the pursuer the same rearguard action presents an entirely different moral aspect. The few squadrons and battalions forming the head of his advance find themselves suddenly brought to a check by a considerable hostile force arrayed in a formidable position. They are forced to halt till their supports begin to come up, from five, ten, or fifteen

miles in the rear. Then, when a body of reserve has begun to accumulate behind them, they launch themselves upon the enemy, who gives ground after more or less fighting and retires. The leading brigade or division of the pursuers considers that it has victoriously driven the whole hostile army from its strong position, and is no less satisfied with itself than is the force to which it has been opposed. In short, all rearguard actions begin with a check to the pursuers; they all end with the retreat of the defenders. This is their necessary course; both parties, if their generals play the game properly, may be content with themselves; the one has gained time for the escape of the main body of the retreating host, the other has cleared the way for the progress of the pursuing army. The only method in which their relative merits can be tested, is by asking whether the rearguard detained the advanced guard as long as might have been expected, inflicted disproportionate losses upon it, and got away with the minimum of loss to itself, or whether, on the other hand, the advanced guard evicted its opponents from their position at a rapid rate, with small sacrifices, and with considerable punishment inflicted on the enemy. The mere facts that the rearguard held back the pursuers for some hours, and that the advanced guard ultimately carried the enemy's position, are obligatory incidents of such fights. When we come to examine the details of the combats which took place between the 11th and 19th of March, we shall neither hold with the French narrators that for many days Ney and two divisions of the 6th Corps fought and held back Wellington's whole army, nor with the English narrators that the Light and 3rd Divisions, unassisted by their comrades, hunted 40,000 French out of the valley of the lower Mondego. Yet it is true that of forty-four French infantry officers, who were killed or wounded in Portugal between these dates, no less than thirty-seven belonged to the divisions of Marchand and Mermet, while, similarly, of twenty-nine British and Portuguese officers hit in the same period, no less than nineteen belonged to the Light Division and eight more to the 3rd. Clearly therefore Ney did not contend with the whole British army, but only with its two leading divisions, and those two divisions did not contend with the whole French army, but only with the two

units which formed its rearguard. Fine writing on both sides, as to struggles against overwhelming odds, must be disregarded. Still more so may the exaggerated estimates as to loss inflicted on the enemy which are to be found in the narratives of most of the first-hand writers. What they are worth may be guessed from Marbot's statement that the British lost 1,000 men at Redinha—Noël raises this liberal estimate to 1,800[1]—the real casualty list being 240. Similarly Grattan tells us that the French had 1,000 men *hors de combat* at Foz do Arouce[2], when their actual loss seems to have been about 250.

The accusations of timidity and over-caution which these contemporary chroniclers lavish upon each other's generals are equally absurd. Wellington is always rallied by the French for want of courage and enterprise, because he did not at once dash the first two or three battalions that came up against a division in position, but waited for his supports. And Ney is criticized by both English and French writers for having sometimes withdrawn from the fight over early, because at Condeixa and on the Alva he hastened to get out of a dangerous situation. Both generals, in reality, acted with perfect tactical correctness; armies do not meet for the purpose of putting in the maximum of fighting, without regard for ends or consequences, and the commander who attacks before he has a sufficient force collected is blameworthy just in the same degree as the commander who holds out too long in a hazardous position.

Most of the French criticism on Wellington is based on the false hypothesis that his army outnumbered Masséna's during the whole retreat, and that he therefore should have achieved greater results. As a matter of fact, as we have seen, he was never stronger than the enemy, because he had been forced to detach Beresford's two divisions against Soult before he started. And when, in the later stages of the retreat, the French were short of Conroux's division of the 9th Corps, which had gone on to Celorico ahead of the main army, it must be remembered that Wellington from March 16th onwards was deprived of Cole's division and the heavy dragoons, who had been

[1] Noël, *Souvenirs militaires*, p. 141.

[2] Grattan's *With the Connaught Rangers, 1809–13*, p. 58.

sent off southward to join Beresford. A pursuing army dealing with a superior retreating army must act with the greatest caution, lest it should suddenly run up against the enemy's whole force, and find itself committed to an offensive action against greater numbers in a strong position. Wellington never fell into this trap; he manœuvred the French out of every line which they took up, without incurring any danger, or allowing his adversary any chance of harming him. While giving all credit to Ney for the brilliant rearguard tactics by which he often held back the pursuers for half a day, it is necessary to give equal credit to Wellington for having fought his way through half a dozen formidable lines of defence, with a minimum of loss, and without once exposing himself to the chance of a serious check. After all, his object was to drive Masséna away from the Mondego and towards Spain, and that object he achieved in the most triumphant fashion.

[1] The student must be specially warned against Fririon's figures for French losses. Though he was Masséna's aide-de-camp, and wrote a quasi-official account of the whole retreat, his numbers are wholly untrustworthy. He states (p. 149) that the 6th Corps only lost 179 killed and wounded between March 1 and March 15. The actual losses were Pombal, 63; Redinha, 227; Casal Novo, at least 55; Foz do Arouce, at least 250 = 600. Similarly he states the loss at Sabugal at 250; the official casualty list sent in to the Marshal gives a total of 750. Fririon, from his position, must have seen, or at least could have seen, these figures.

SECTION XXIV: CHAPTER II

'GUARDA AND SABUGAL. MARCH 22ND—APRIL 12TH, 1811

At noon on March 22nd, the day following that on which the French head quarters had reached Celorico, Masséna issued a new set of orders, entirely contradictory to those which he had been giving during the last fifteen days. Though on the 19th he had stated his intention of 'falling back closer to his base of operations on the fortresses [Almeida and Rodrigo], and giving the army a rest after its fatigues and privations[1],' he now proposed to plunge back once more into the mountains, and to swerve aside from his places of strength and his dépôts. The commanders of the corps received the astounding news that it was the intention of the Commander-in-Chief to turn south-eastward, towards the Spanish frontier and the central Tagus, with the object of taking up a position in the Coria–Plasencia country, from which he would threaten central Portugal on a new front. This necessitated a march from Celorico through the mountains of Belmonte and Penamacor, and then across the Sierra de Meras, into the thinly-peopled plateau of northern Estremadura.

Supposing that the centre of the Iberian peninsula had been a fertile plain resembling Lombardy or Flanders, there would have been something to say for this plan. Still more might it have been advisable if the French army had been a fresh and intact force just opening a campaign. Pelet, Masséna's chief aide-de-camp, tries to justify the proposal by saying that 'it was more conformable to the general rules of strategy; we should have connected ourselves with the 5th Corps in Estremadura, with the Army of the Centre, and the general pivot of operations at Madrid; we should have brought Lord Wellington back to the position that he had quitted; we should have kept the results of the advantages recently won in Estremadura, which were so soon to be lost;

[1] Dispatch to Berthier, from Maceira, of that date.

we should also have had the means to menace once more Central Portugal and the Lines of Torres Vedras[1].' This is all very plausible, but it omits the crucial facts that the Army of Portugal was tired out, destitute of munitions, and almost destitute of food, and that it was proposed to lead it across two difficult ranges of mountains full of gorges and defiles, into a region which was one of the most thinly peopled and desolate in all Spain, where there was not a single French soldier, much less a dépôt of any sort. This was the same district in which Victor had starved in 1809, and in passing through which Wellington had suffered so many privations on the way to Talavera. It had been visited in February by a flying column under Lahoussaye, sent out from Talavera, which had got as far as Plasencia and Alcantara, and then retired, because it was absolutely impossible for 3,000 men to live in it.

Masséna's maps were very bad—the actual set used by his headquarters staff is in existence, and can be seen at Belfast[2]. But his intelligence department must have been worse than his maps, if he was unaware of the character of the country on the border of Portugal and Spain, and of that lying beyond, in northern Estremadura. He might have asked information about it from Reynier and Ney, who had both crossed it, but he did not. Most striking of all, however, is the ignorance shown in these orders of the physical and moral state of the French army. If it had ever reached Plasencia, it would have got there without a gun or a baggage mule—the caissons and carriages were almost all gone already. A single set of figures may serve to show the situation: the artillery of the 8th Corps started from Almeida in September 1810 with 142 wheeled units—guns, caissons, waggons, &c., and 891 horses. It got back to Ciudad Rodrigo on April 4, 1811, with 49 guns and caissons drawn by 182 horses, having lost 93 vehicles and 709 horses. Forty-one of the caissons and waggons had been destroyed before the commencement of the retreat, the rest had been dropped between Thomar and Celorico[3]. There were left at the end of March only 24 guns

[1] Pelet's *Appendice sur la Guerre d'Espagne* in *Victoires et Conquêtes*, 21, p. 336.

[2] Captured at Vittoria, they were long after given to Belfast University.

[3] All these interesting figures come from the diary of Colonel Noël,

with 25 caissons of ammunition, to draw which required all the horses remaining. How long could this artillery have fought with only one caisson of ammunition per gun left? How many horses would have been alive after another hundred miles of mountain roads? Even if some guns had got to Plasencia, how long would it have taken to get them ammunition from Salamanca or Madrid, the nearest dépôts? The same question would be no less forcible with regard to infantry ammunition, which was depleted to an equal extent with that of the artillery.

But it is even more important to remember that the Army of Portugal was also in desperate straits for boots and clothing. In many regiments a third or a quarter of the men had no footgear but 'rivlins,' or mocassins made every few days from the hides of cattle. The uniforms were in rags; many soldiers had nothing that recalled the regulation attire but the *capote* that covered everything.

Yet the main thing of all was the moral aspect of affairs. The army would fight when it was its duty, as French armies always have done, but it was discontented, sulky, angry with the Marshal, to whom it attributed its miseries—though its indignation might have been more justly reserved for the Emperor, who had set his lieutenant an impossible task. The rank and file had sunk low in discipline, as must be always the case when troops have been living by daily plunder for six months. And this same want of discipline was most evident among the generals, who, now that Masséna had failed, openly criticized him before their staffs, and often neglected his orders. Masséna suspected Ney, Junot, and Reynier alike of intending to denounce him to the Emperor as a blunderer. It will be remembered that he had already detected Reynier in a trick of this description[1]. Ney had been girding at his orders with fury ever since the retreat began, and was telling all who cared to listen that a hasty return to Spain was the only possible policy, and that the dream of holding out on the Mondego or the Alva was absurd.

commanding the artillery of Clausel's division; see his memoirs, pp. 137 and 146.

[1] See p. 80.

It was probably not on mere strategic grounds, but because he was determined to assert himself, to prove that he was master of his own movements, and that he was not yet a beaten man or a failure, that Masséna issued orders on the 22nd for the 2nd Corps to make ready to move southward, not northward, from Guarda, and for the 6th and 8th to prepare to follow on the same route. This provoked an explosion of wrath on the part of Ney, who in the course of four hours of the afternoon wrote three successive letters to his commander, in terms of growing irritation. In the first, which was sent off before receiving the detailed orders for the new movement, he merely set forth all the objections to it, and inquired whether Masséna had the Emperor's leave for such a general change of plans. In the second, after he had received and read the orders, he protested formally against them, and said that, unless positive instructions from Paris authorizing the new scheme had been received, the 6th Corps should not march. He gave many arguments, and they were incontestably true. 'The army has need to rest behind the shelter of Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, in order to receive the clothing and shoes which are absolutely necessary, and which must be brought up from the magazines. Your Excellency is mistaken in thinking that food can be got in abundance in the region of Coria and Plasencia. I have marched through that country [during the attempt to cut off Wellington's retreat from Talavera in 1809], and it is impossible to exaggerate its sterility or the badness of its roads. Your Excellency will not get one single gun so far, with the teams that we have brought out of Portugal. Moreover this manœuvre, so singular at this particular moment, would entirely uncover Old Castile, and compromise all our operations in Spain. I am fully aware of the responsibility which I take upon myself in making formal opposition to your intentions, but, even if I were destined to be cashiered or condemned to death, I could not execute the march on Coria and Plasencia directed by your Highness, unless (of course) it has been ordered by the Emperor[1].'

Within two hours of the second letter Ney sent in the third, which was no mere protest, nor even a mere refusal to move, but

[1] The three letters are all printed in full in Fririon's *Memoir*, and the second of them in Belmas's *Pièces justificatives*, p. 507.

an open declaration of his intention to march back to Almeida. 'I warn your Excellency that to-morrow I shall leave my positions of Carapichina and Cortiço, and échelon my troops from Celorico to Freixadas, and on the day after they will be between Freixadas and Almeida. This disposition is forced on me, in order to prevent the whole force from disbanding, under the pretext of searching for the food necessary for its subsistence, for food is now absolutely lacking.'

Unless he was to surrender his authority altogether, and obey his subordinate, Masséna had now to strike. Ney had put himself absolutely in the wrong in the way of military subordination, though he was as absolutely in the right in the way of strategy. And the Commander-in-Chief had every technical justification when he formally deposed him from the command of the 6th Corps, and directed him to leave for Valladolid without delay, and there await the orders of the Emperor. Loison, the senior of the three divisional generals of the 6th Corps, was ordered to take over its command next morning. Several of Ney's partisans urged him to refuse obedience, to seize the person of Masséna, and to declare himself Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Portugal. We are assured that he would have been backed in the step by the whole of his own corps, and would have met no resistance from the others, for Masséna was universally disliked, and every man wished to continue the retreat on Almeida of which Ney was the advocate[1]. But he shrank from levying open war upon his chief, and departed among the tears of the whole 6th Corps, of which he knew every officer and many men by sight. It had been under him, without a break, since he first formed it at the camp of Montreuil, near Boulogne, in 1804.

Masséna started off his aide-de-camp Pelet for Paris next day, with orders to get to the Emperor without delay, and explain the situation before Ney could tell his tale. This his emissary succeeded in doing, and his representations to Napoleon were backed by those of Foy, who had borne Masséna's earlier message

[1] Ney's aide-de-camp Sprünglin says in his diary (p. 474) that Ney hesitated for some time before rejecting the idea of a *coup de main* against Masséna, which was hotly urged upon him, and opines that it would have been successful and most popular with the army.

of March 9, and was still in Paris. The Emperor seems to have approved of Masséna's stringent dealing with his subordinate, and even to have expressed his satisfaction with the new plan for marching the Army of Portugal to the middle Tagus[1]. He also declared that corps-commanders of the type of Ney and Junot were a mistake, and that to avoid further friction he would cut up the whole army into divisions, and abolish the corps altogether. But at the same time he allowed Ney to return to Paris, gave him a mere formal reproof, and then continued to employ him in posts of the highest importance. Next year the Marshal was to win his last title of 'Prince of the Moscowa' under his master's eye, on the field of Borodino.

Ney having been superseded and banished, Masséna could carry out his wild plan for a march towards northern Estremadura through the midst of the Portuguese mountains. On the 23rd the 6th Corps was brought into Celorico, and its artillery moved forward as far as Ratoeiro on the Guarda road. The 8th Corps left Celorico and moved in the same direction, with its cavalry at Ponte do Ladrão in advance. Drouet with Conroux's division had already gone back towards Almeida, with the sick and wounded of the whole army; he was ordered to

[1] Foy to Masséna, April 8, 1811: 'J'ai dit à Sa Majesté que vous paraissiez être dans l'intention de porter votre quartier général à Guarda, mais que (ne pouvant pas vivre dans cette position) vous seriez probablement obligé de descendre jusqu'à Alcantara. Cette position a paru à l'Empereur propre à protéger également le midi et le nord de l'Espagne.'

Some parts of this interview of Foy with Napoleon, related in his usual vivid style, are too good to omit. 'Did Masséna really intend to force the passage of the Tagus? He did? Well then, he would have destroyed his army if he had tried. But I was not worried about it; I knew he would never try to cross. Would Masséna pass the Tagus, he who in the Isle of Lobau [Wagram campaign of 1809] would not try to pass a mere brook! The moment you told me that he had returned from in front of Torres Vedras I knew that he would come back, and refuse to risk a general engagement. . . . Wellington is a cleverer man than Masséna: he kept his eye fixed on Claparéde's division; if Claparéde had been brought forward, the English would have expected to be attacked, would have gone back into their Lines. . . . Portugal is too far off—I can't go there myself. The business would take six months, and in that six months everything would be hung up in Europe,' &c. See Foy's *Vie Militaire*, pp. 139–40.

take post at Val-de-Mula on the Turon, between Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo. His other division, that of Claparéde, was sent from Guarda to join him on the same day. Drouet, according to some versions of the events of this critical week, had moved back of his own accord without waiting for Masséna's orders. But it is clear that there was absolute necessity to tell off some covering force for the frontiers of Leon, if the main army was to be drawn away to the central Tagus, lest Wellington should send off a detachment to attack Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, and find nothing to hinder him.

For the next five days the march southward and eastward was continued. After a rest of only two nights at Guarda, the 2nd Corps moved on the 24th of March by two bad parallel roads through the hills, and encamped with its first division at Sortelha and its second at Aguas Bellas: a flanking detachment of cavalry occupied Belmonte, further to the west, in order to keep a look-out on the valley of the Zezere. The 8th Corps took up the position which the 2nd had evacuated at Guarda: it is recorded to have lost many of its already depleted stock of horses in climbing the steep ascent into that town, which stands on the very summit of the Serra da Estrella, at a height of over 3,400 feet above sea-level. No other town in Portugal lies so high. The 6th Corps followed the 8th, but halted short of Guarda, to cover the slow progress of its artillery, which had to be dragged up the defile with doubled teams, so that half the guns and vehicles had to wait at the bottom, while their beasts were assisting to draw the first section to its lofty destination.

The 25th saw the head of the 2nd Corps at Val de Lobos on the road to Penamacor; the main body painfully trailed along behind. Junot and the 8th Corps left Guarda, but took, not the path that Reynier had followed, but an equally difficult one leading to Belmonte. But the guns could not proceed with the infantry divisions. They had to be left at Guarda, the Belmonte road being pronounced absolutely impracticable for them: this was a serious check to Masséna, who had counted on using this route for the whole corps. Of the 6th Corps one division (Marchand) entered Guarda, a second (Loison's old division, now commanded by Ferey) halted at Rapoulla, at the foot of the

great mountain on which that town lies. The other division (Mermet) had taken a flanking turn, more in the plain, and lay at Goveias, fifteen miles north-east from Guarda, with a rear-guard at Freixadas on the road to Almeida.

On the 26th, the last day on which it can be said that Masséna's insane scheme for marching to Estremadura was still being carried out, the whole 6th Corps closed up on Guarda; the 8th Corps at Belmonte sent out reconnaissances towards Covilhão, Manteigas, and the Zezere; but the 2nd, which was heading the column of march, was completely stuck in the mountains between Sortelha and Penamacor. It must have seemed a bitter piece of irony to Reynier when he received orders 'to profit by his stay in his position to collect grain, and bake bread and biscuit[1],' for he was in an almost entirely uninhabited country, on the watershed between the sources of the Coa and the Zezere, with the Sierra de Meras, the frontier-range between Spain and Portugal, in front of him.

Next morning (March 27) Reynier, though he had the example of Ney's fate before him, was driven by sheer necessity into sending an argumentative dispatch to the Commander-in-Chief, who had now got as far as Guarda. He begged him to give up his great plan: 'no food could be procured for the whole way from Guarda to Plasencia; if the corps ever got to the latter place, it would find no resources there, for the Coria–Plasencia country does not grow its own corn, but is fed in ordinary times from the valley of the Tietar and other distant regions.' This Reynier knew from his own experiences in that region, when he had been observing Hill in the preceding summer. He also warned Masséna that he was taking the army into an *impasse*, for the Tagus is a complete barrier between northern and southern Estremadura, and could not be crossed save at the ferry of Alconetar, where there were now no boats, the bridge of Alcantara (now broken), and that of Almaraz, where there was only a flying bridge of pontoons[2].

At the same time Junot was writing from Belmonte to say that he could go no further; not only had he been forced to leave all his guns behind at Guarda, but 'les troupes meurent

[1] Fririon, *Campagne de Portugal*, p. 175.

[2] For all this see Koch's *Vie de Masséna*, pp. 413–20.

de faim, et ne peuvent pas se présenter en ligne.' He had scoured the country as far as Covilhão with his cavalry, in search of food, with the sole result of ruining the few horses that were still in passable condition.

In short, the game was up—it ought never to have been begun—and Ney's remonstrances (though not his insubordination) were completely vindicated. On March 28th Masséna reluctantly conceded that a prompt retreat into Spain was the only course possible. But he chose to base his change of plans not on the true ground, viz. that he had ordered the army to perform an impossibility, but on two other facts. A report had just been received from Drouet; that general, on reaching the neighbourhood of Almeida, had sent word that the fortress was in the utmost danger, for it had only fifteen days' food [1], and, if the 9th Corps had to retire, it would fall from starvation in a fortnight. The state of Ciudad Rodrigo was little better. He therefore besought the Prince of Essling not to expose these two all-important places, by carrying the Army of Portugal off to the valley of the Tagus. This gave a strategical reason for surrendering the new scheme of campaign, but there was also a moral one. 'Lassitude reigns in the Army of Portugal: many of its regiments were in the expeditions of the Duke of Dalmatia [Soult's Oporto campaign of 1809] or that of the Duke of Abrantes [Junot's Vimeiro campaign of 1808]. The officers murmur, and, as I must again repeat, the army must have two or three months of rest to recover itself. I was the only soul who was determined to hold on in Portugal, and unless I had set my will to it in the strongest fashion, we should not have stopped fifteen days therein. . . . The troops are good, but they need repose. Living by marauding, even though it was organized marauding, such as we have been compelled to authorize, has in no small degree weakened discipline, which is in the greatest need of restoration [2].' All this was very true, but it had been equally true on March 22nd, when Masséna gave his orders for the march on Plasencia. The root of his failure lay

[1] This was a gross exaggeration, as it turned out that there was forty days' food in hand. Masséna accused Drouet of drawing on the rations for his own 9th Corps to an inexcusable extent.

[2] Masséna to Berthier, March 31, from Alfayates.

neither in the state of Almeida, nor in the demoralized condition of the army, but in the fact that he had directed his troops to execute a movement which was impossible without magazines to live upon, or roads to march upon [1].

On March 29 Masséna gave the orders which marked the abandonment of his great plan, and commenced his retrograde movement towards Ciudad Rodrigo. Reynier and the 2nd Corps, abandoning the mountain roads, came down by a lateral march to Sabugal in the upper valley of the Coa: they were to stop there till Junot and the 8th Corps, coming in from Belmonte, should have reached them and passed behind them. The 6th Corps meanwhile was to halt at Guarda till the 8th Corps had extricated itself from the mountains, but it was ordered to throw back one division (Ferey's) to Adão on the Sabugal road, eight miles to the south-east, as the first échelon of its forthcoming movement of retreat towards the Coa. Masséna himself and the head quarters of the army moved from Guarda on the morning of the 29th to Pega, a village some miles nearer the Coa than Adão.

On this morning the British army, of which Masséna had heard practically nothing for eight days, put in its appearance in the most forcible fashion, falling upon the enemy just as he was in the midst of a complicated movement, with his three corps separated from each other by distances of some twenty miles.

Wellington, it will be remembered, had halted about half of his army on the Alva upon March 20th, for sheer want of provisions, sending on only the two light cavalry brigades and the 3rd, 6th, and Light Divisions to pursue Masséna on the Celorico road. He had no doubt that the enemy was about to retire from Celorico and Guarda towards the Spanish frontier with the smallest delay—the policy of Ney and of every one else in the French army save Masséna himself. On the 24th, Slade's dragoons occupied Celorico, and reported that the enemy had left it on the preceding day; two columns were traced: the larger [6th and 8th Corps] had gone towards Guarda, the smaller [Drouet with Conroux's division of the 9th Corps] had taken the

[1] When Reynier marched from Coria to Guarda in September 1810, he had been obliged to make the vast circle Coria–Alfayates–Sabugal–Guarda, in order to avoid the miserable mountain roads.

high-road towards Freixadas and Almeida. There was nothing yet to indicate to Wellington Masséna's intention of proceeding in the direction of Estremadura and the middle Tagus. He wrote on the 25th to General Spencer, 'The French have retired from Celorico, and appear to intend to take up a line on the Coa. Their left has gone by Guarda, apparently for Sabugal'—and to Beresford, 'The French have gone towards the Coa: their left will cross at Sabugal, I should think, and their right about Pinhel and Almeida[1]'.

On this day (March 25) the first convoy of provisions from the new base established at Coimbra reached the camps on the Alva, and Wellington was at last able to set the 1st and 5th Divisions and Ashworth's Portuguese in motion[2]. They started on the Celorico road, and reached Galliges that night. No news had yet come in of the southward movement of the French from Guarda, which had begun on the preceding day. The vanguard of the army had now established itself in Celorico, which was reached by the Light and 3rd Divisions on the 25th–26th: they had come up very slowly, being sadly distressed for food, and therefore forced to make very short stages. Only one ration of bread had been given out in the last four days.

On the 26th the cavalry pushed out from Celorico[3], Arentschildt's brigade took the Almeida road, Hawker's (this colonel was in temporary command of the 1st and 14th, while Slade managed the whole vanguard) pushed towards Guarda. Each swept the villages on the flanks of its route. The result of the exploration was to show that a very large body of the enemy had retired on Guarda, and a very small body on Almeida. A patrol of the 16th Light Dragoons hit on Mermet's rearguard and took an officer and eighteen men from it. The reports of the following day came to much the same—it began to be clear that almost the whole French army must have gone to Guarda,

[1] Both dispatches are dated from Santa Marinha, March 25th.

[2] Pack's Portuguese were so exhausted and sickly that they were left behind for a rest, and to wait for more food, at Mangualde on the upper Mondego.

[3] 'General Slade had been in Celorico the whole of yesterday,' complains Tomkinson of the 16th, 'and yet had not the least idea where the French had retired to.' Diary, p. 89.

and at last Wellington began to have the first news of Masséna's southward movement, though he did not yet grasp its meaning. 'The French appear to stick about Guarda,' he wrote to Beresford, 'and yesterday they had some people well on towards Manteigas: but I have heard nothing of them from Grant [the famous scout and intelligence officer] and I conclude they were only a patrol.' Now Manteigas is at the source of the Zezere, near Covilhão, and this 'patrol' was nothing less than Junot's flank cavalry, exploring out from Belmonte, which the 8th Corps had reached on the preceding day. But so little did Wellington guess what was running in Masséna's mind, that he wrote on this day that he was proposing to take a short turn to the Alemtejo to supervise Beresford's operations (which were hanging fire in the most discouraging fashion), as soon as the French were over the frontier [1].

Meanwhile Wellington made up his mind that, since the enemy persisted in lingering at Guarda, he must manœuvre them out of that lofty city. But imagining that two, if not three, corps were concentrated in its neighbourhood, he would not attack till his rear had come up from the Alva to Celorico. This did not happen till the 29th, when the 1st Division reached that place, with the 5th close behind. But on the previous day he had already started off Picton to cross the Serra da Estrella by the mountain road by Prados, and the Light Division with Arentschildt's cavalry to take the longer route on the other bank of the Mondego, which goes to Guarda via Baracal, Villa Franca, and Rapoulla. A flanking detachment, composed of a wing of the 95th Rifles, came upon a small rearguard left behind by Mermet at Freixadas, and turned them out of the village, taking a few prisoners (March 28).

On the 29th the Light Division and the two cavalry brigades moved in upon Guarda from Rapoulla, while Picton closed in from the west, on the side of the higher hills, and General Alexander Campbell, with the 6th Division, advanced between the other two columns, by the road on the east side of the Mondego which passes through Ramilhosa [2]. The three converg-

[1] Wellington to Henry Wellesley, March 27, from Gouvea.

[2] Napier (iii. 129) is wrong in saying that the movement was 'Supported by the 1st, 5th, and 7th Divisions.' These only reached Celorico that

ing columns appeared upon the heights around Guarda within a few hours of each other, Picton being first on the spot. The French had hardly any warning, for the cavalry screen had kept the British hidden till the last. Picton found Mermet's and Marchand's divisions on the plateau of Guarda, with Ferey's at its foot on the eastern side, already starting on its march for Adão, which was to be the commencement of the general retreat that Masséna contemplated on the next day. It seems clear, from French sources, that Loison was practically taken by surprise. Fririon, the chief of the staff of the Army of Portugal, says that, visiting Guarda to see how the 6th Corps was arranged, he found Maucune's brigade encamped in a ravine dominated on all sides, with only one battalion on the hill on which Picton appeared a few minutes later, and the rest in a position where they were perfectly helpless. There was no other covering force at all out in front of the town. Hence, when the British closed in, Loison got flurried, and, seeing the Light Division threatening to press in on his rear, absconded at once without fighting. As his force was still nearly 15,000 strong, and Wellington had as yet only three divisions, of no greater numbers, in front of the formidable hill of Guarda, it seems that the flight of the 6th Corps from such a position was somewhat ignominious. Ney would undoubtedly have fought a brilliant detaining action with his rearguard [1].

Loison went off in great haste on the two roads open to him, both leading south-east towards the Coa: one by Adão and

day, and were fifteen miles from the field. See Diary of Stothert of the Guards, p. 232. Napier was misled by the vague wording of Wellington's dispatch to Lord Liverpool (vii. 425), from which it might be supposed that these divisions were up.

[1] The 3rd Division arrived some time before the 6th and the Light were in actual touch with the enemy.

Picton writes about this: 'Masséna with full 20,000 men was on the heights, and in the city of Guarda, when I made my appearance at 9 in the morning, with three British and two Portuguese regiments. . . . He ought immediately to have attacked me, but allowed me to remain within 400 yards of his main body for about two hours, before the other columns came up. But of course their movements were alarming him, and decided him not to hazard an attack, the failure of which would have probably brought on the total discomfiture of his army.' Letter in Robinson's *Life of Picton*, vol. ii. pp. 3, 4.

Pega towards Sabugal, the other by Villa Mendo and Marmeleiro to Rapoulla da Coa. The British infantry could never come up with him. The cavalry pressed his rear, and made many prisoners, mainly foraging parties which were straggling in to join the main body. A patrol of the 16th Light Dragoons captured 64 men in one party, and took 150 sheep and 20 oxen [1]. The total number of prisoners was between two and three hundred. But the French rearguard of three battalions of infantry kept well together, and was in too good order to be broken by unsupported squadrons of cavalry. The main body of the 6th Corps marched all day towards the fords of the Coa, but had not reached that river at nightfall. One of its columns encamped at Pega, the other at Marmeleiro.

On the next morning (March 30) Masséna was in a very dangerous situation: his three corps were still unconcentrated, and Junot was lingering at Belmonte, from which he only moved that morning towards Sabugal. If Wellington had known of the isolated position of the 8th Corps, he might, by pushing down a column from Celorico, have cut off its line of retreat towards the Coa, where the 2nd Corps was awaiting it. But by ill-luck no reports came to hand about Junot, and Wellington was under the impression that two, and not one, corps had been holding Guarda when he attacked it [2]. He was aware that Reynier was at Sabugal, but did not apparently receive any information which demonstrated that there was another heavy column in this direction, now commencing to move straight across the front of his own advanced guard. Junot was able to extricate himself by two painful marches over villainous cross-roads in the mountains, from Belmonte to Urgueira (March 30) and from Urgueira to Sabugal (March 31). He was only able to win salvation because he had left all his artillery behind him at Guarda, and was therefore able to go wherever infantry could

[1] See Tomkinson's Diary, p. 90.

[2] Wellington to Beresford, from Celorico, March 30: 'Yesterday we manœuvred the French out of Guarda. Masséna was there, some say with his whole army, I think certainly with two corps: not a shot was fired.' (*Dispatches*, vii. 412.) Same day to Charles Stuart: 'They were much stronger than we: I had only three divisions on the hill.' (*Dispatches*, vii. 418.)

climb. His guns had been given in charge to the 6th Corps, and formed part of the column under Ferey that marched by Pega to the Coa.

Meanwhile the 6th Corps had to complete its retreat to the line of the Coa, and reached it in the afternoon, harassed but not seriously damaged by the two British cavalry brigades, of which Hawker's followed the column on the northern and Arentschildt's that on the southern of the two parallel roads on which Loison was moving. All accounts agree that General Slade, who was directing both brigades, showed over-caution, and missed several fair opportunities of attacking the enemy's rearguard, in open ground very favourable to cavalry and horse-artillery tactics[1]. He only picked up a few stragglers, and the enemy was safely across the Coa by nightfall, Marchand's division at Ponte Sequeiro, Ferey's and Mermet's at Bismula, seven miles further to the south, where they were now only eight miles from Reynier's right wing at Sabugal. The British had not yet detected Junot's flank march, which was hourly bringing him nearer to safety.

On the 31st the 8th Corps escaped from its dangers, reached Sabugal, and, passing behind Reynier, pushed on ten miles further to Alfayates, where it halted for a much-needed rest. The troops were reduced to the last extreme by exhaustion and hunger. At Alfayates, within three miles of the Spanish frontier, and only two marches from Ciudad Rodrigo, they at last began to receive regular provisions, and had nearly got out of the mountains into the rolling upland of southern Leon.

Why Masséna, the moment that he knew that Junot was safe, did not continue to retreat on to his magazines it is hard to say. But he remained for two days more behind the upper Coa, and thereby exposed himself to continued danger, for his army was strung out on too thin a line, watching twenty miles of the river.

[1] Napier's statements (iii. 129) are quite borne out by Tomkinson's Diary: 'In the rear of Pega is an open plain of two miles which the enemy had to pass: as usual we looked at them for half an hour: then the guns were ordered up, and in place of firing at the main body could only get within range of their pickets . . . we continued to follow, and, although they had no cavalry, our general was afraid to go into the plain to get the guns in range of the infantry: they of course got clear off.' (Diary, p. 91.)

Apparently he thought, from seeing no British infantry on the 30th and 31st, that Wellington had halted at Guarda, and did not intend to continue the pursuit on Sabugal. His own forces continued in their old positions throughout the 1st and 2nd of April, save that all Montbrun's reserve cavalry was sent to the rear, to the valleys of the Agueda and the Azava, to rest and recover itself, the larger proportion of the surviving horses being quite unserviceable. The corps-cavalry of Reynier, Junot, and Loison also sent back many dismounted men, and hundreds more whose mounts were incapable of use for the present, so that the brigade of light horse attached to each was reduced to a few hundred sabres, many of the regiments having only one efficient squadron left, and none more than two [1]. The retreat from Santarem had practically disabled the French cavalry.

Wellington, meanwhile, having discovered by the explorations of his horse, that the enemy was standing firm on the Coa, resolved to dislodge them from their last hold on Portugal. To do this he required his whole force, and the 1st and 5th Divisions moved onward from Celorico to Freixadas on the 31st, to come up into line with the 3rd, 6th, and Light Divisions. With them there was now present the long-expected 7th Division, which reached the front at the end of the month, though incomplete. For the light brigade of the German Legion had arrived at Lisbon more than a fortnight late, and only four battalions in the British service [2] and five of Portuguese [3] were at present allotted to the newly formed unit. But in addition several newly landed battalions [4] came up and joined the old divisions, so that nearly 6,000 infantry in all were added to the army. After deducting many men left behind from sickness or exhaustion [5], during his advance over the wasted regions of Beira, Wellington had now about 38,000 men with him, a force very

[1] As late as May 1 the regimental statistics show that the 3rd Dragoons had only 139 available horses, sick or sound, and the 10th Dragoons only 233. They had started the campaign with 563 and 535 respectively.

[2] We cannot say 'four British battalions,' for two of them were foreign corps, the *Chasseurs Britanniques* and the Brunswick Oels Light Infantry. The two line regiments were the 51st and 85th.

[3] 7th and 19th Line and 2nd Caçadores, forming Collins's brigade.

[4] viz. 2/88th for 3rd Division, 2/52nd for Light Division, 1/36th for the 6th Division.

[5] Including Pack's whole brigade.

nearly equal to that of the enemy, which on the 1st of April had sunk to 39,905 including officers, if the 9th Corps, now in the vicinity of Almeida, be omitted.

The plan which Wellington evolved for the final eviction of the French from Portugal was to turn their left wing on the side of Sabugal, while containing their right wing (the 6th Corps) on the central Coa. Occupation was at the same time found for the 9th Corps, as Wilson's and Trant's Militia brigades were directed to cross the Coa near its confluence with the Douro, and to threaten Almeida from the north side, a move which could not fail to have the effect of keeping Drouet pinned down to his present position, since his special task was the protection of that place. It is a little difficult to make out why Wellington chose to break in upon the French left rather than their right. From the strategical point of view it would have been preferable to cross the Coa north of the flank of the 6th Corps, and to throw the whole weight of the British army so as to drive the French southward, towards Sabugal and Alfayates. For they would thus be separated from the 9th Corps, thrust into the barren and nearly roadless mountain district of the Sierra de Gata and the Sierra de Meras, and cut off from Almeida and even from Ciudad Rodrigo, which they were desirous of covering. Whereas to turn their left wing would only have the effect of pushing them back on their natural line of retreat towards Rodrigo, and would press them towards rather than away from the 9th Corps. The British general's course seems, however, to have been guided by tactical rather than by strategical considerations. He thought that he had a good opportunity of catching the 2nd Corps at Sabugal in an isolated position, and crushing it, before the 6th or the 8th could come up to its help. And but for a chance of the weather it seems that he might have accomplished this design with complete success.

Sabugal, a little walled place with a ruined Moorish castle, lies in a projecting bend or hook of the Coa, which turns back just above the town at right angles to its original course, which is directly from east to west. The river is not far from its source, and though its banks are steep its waters are narrow, and there are many fords both above and below Sabugal. If a

strong turning column, concealing itself in the hills, passed along the south bank of the Coa, and crossed the river some miles above the town, it could throw itself upon the rear of the 2nd Corps and cut it off from its retreat on Alfayates. Meanwhile a general attack by Wellington's main body would drive it from its position straight into the arms of the turning column, and there would be a good chance of inflicting a crushing defeat upon the corps, perhaps of capturing it wholesale. If the attack were delivered by surprise at dawn, the whole matter ought to be completed before either the 6th or the 8th Corps could get up to the support of Reynier. When at last they could appear on the field, the 2nd Corps would be already demolished, and Wellington was prepared to risk a general action.

It was with this design that his movements of the 1st and 2nd of April were planned. The 1st, 5th, and 7th Divisions were brought up from Celorico to Guarda, and from thence to join the Light, 3rd, and 6th Divisions which were already lying along the Coa over against the French lines. The 6th Division was left at Rapoulla de Coa, facing Loison's centre, and a single battalion of the 7th Division observed the bridge of Sequeiro opposite his northern flank. These troops showed themselves freely, and kept Loison anxious, for nothing seemed more likely than that the general attack would be directed against him. Meanwhile the whole of the rest of the army, five divisions and two cavalry brigades, over 30,000 men, was launched against Reynier. The turning column was to be formed by the Light Division and the two cavalry brigades, who were to ford the Coa at two separate points two and three miles respectively above Sabugal. If Erskine, who was to command it, so decided, the column might cross even higher up: it was intended that it should appear far beyond Reynier's left wing, and should strike over the hills of Quadraseis to the village of Torre on the Alfayates road, where it would be placed across his line of retreat. The ground in that direction was open and favourable for cavalry. Meanwhile the enemy was to be given no chance of falling upon this detachment, since he was to be attacked in front with very superior forces. Picton and his division were to cross an easy ford a mile south of Sabugal, the 5th Division was to assail the town-bridge at the same moment. The 1st and

7th Divisions were a few miles behind, ready to support the two leading columns in the front attack. It was intended that the turning force should cross the Coa first, but only so far ahead of the frontal attacking force as to make it certain that it should not get engaged with the main body of the enemy, before the 3rd and 5th Divisions were coming into action. The French pickets having been pushed close back to the river on the preceding day by the cavalry, it was certain that they would see nothing of the movements till they were well developed.

Unfortunately the morning of the 3rd of April was one of dense fog—good for concealing the march of the troops, but bad in that it prevented the troops from discovering their objective. Both Picton and Dunlop (who was commanding the 5th Division in Leith's absence on leave) resolved not to move, and sent to Wellington, who was hard by, for orders. Not so the rash and presumptuous Erskine, who repeated this day the precise mistake that he had made at Casal Novo three weeks back. Without coming himself to the front, he sent an aide-de-camp to the Light Division, to bid it descend to the river and cross at the ford which had been assigned to it in the general scheme. The cavalry were also ordered to move forward and take the other ford, more to the right, by which they were to get into the enemy's rear.

Beckwith's brigade, the leading one of the Light Division, consisted of the 1/43rd, Elder's Caçadores (the 3rd of that arm), and four companies of the 1/95th Rifles. It was waiting in column, on the road above the river, when Erskine's aide-de-camp rode up, and asked the brigadier in a peremptory tone 'why he did not cross.' Beckwith at once struck off in the direction where he supposed the ford to be, but, missing his line in the fog, did not march sufficiently far to the right, and reached the Coa not at the true ford but at a hazardous passage nearly a mile nearer to Sabugal [2], where the water came up to the men's armpits. Drummond's brigade followed at a distance, and used the same wrong path. The cavalry, to whom Sir William Erskine

[1] Details may be verified in Wellington, *Supplementary Dispatches*, xiii. p. 611.

[2] Wellington's orders were to cross 2 miles at least above Sabugal. The actual crossing was only 1¼ miles above.

had joined himself, taking their bearings from the Light Division, came down to the river not very far to its right, at a point some two miles more to the west than was intended. They lost much time in searching for a ford; by the time that they found one, the Light Division was already heavily engaged, and the passage ultimately discovered was so close to that force that the Dragoons came up almost in Drummond's rear, instead of far out on his flank.

Reynier's pickets were close to the water's edge, and opened a scattering fire on the head of Beckwith's column while it was still struggling across the river. But they were easily driven off, and the brigade formed up on the further side, in the usual order of the Light Division, with a very strong skirmishing screen, composed of four companies of the 95th and three of Elder's Caçadores. The 43rd and the other half-battalion of the Portuguese came on in line, a few hundred yards behind the riflemen. They were still smothered in the fog, and could discover nothing more than that they were pursuing the French pickets up a gentle slope, mostly unenclosed waste ground, but cut up by a few fields with low stone walls. Pushing forward briskly, they presently came upon a French regiment, which was already under arms, and preparing to show a front against them. What had happened in the mist was that the Light Division, instead of getting round the flank of Reynier's position, had struck directly against it. The 2nd Corps had been established on the long hill behind Sabugal and above the Coa, ready to resist a frontal attack, with Merle's division on the left and Heudelet's on the right, above the town. Beckwith had struck upon the 4th Léger, the left regiment of the left-hand division of the corps. Merle, warned by the fire of the pickets, was making a new front, *en potence* to the general line of the French army, and had just got the four battalions of the extreme flank regiment drawn out. They were, as usual, in column of divisions, (double companies), with a weak skirmishing line in front, which was at once driven in by the Rifles and Caçadores. Merle then led down his four columns against the screen of light troops which covered Beckwith's line, and drove them back with considerable loss to himself, and little to his opponents, since he had only skirmishers to shoot at, while his own compact battalion

columns were very vulnerable. The light troops fell back to each flank of the line presented by the 43rd and the formed companies of the Caçadores, and then halted and turned upon the enemy. The balance of numbers was now in favour of Beckwith's brigade, for though he had only two and a half battalions and the enemy four, the French units were very weak, the 4th Léger having only 1,100 men, while the 43rd alone was a strong battalion of 750 bayonets and its auxiliary light troops were at least 600 more. It was not surprising, therefore, that the French regiment soon went to the rear, badly hit, after a short sharp exchange of volleys. Beckwith followed, pushing the enemy through a small chestnut wood, till he arrived at the southern summit of the ridge on which the French line had been drawn out. Here he found himself confronted by the seven battalions of the 36th of the Line, and the 2nd Léger, the remaining regiments of Merle's division, which were hurrying along the crest to the assistance of their comrades of the 4th Léger.

Blinding rain came on at this moment, and much diminished the efficacy of the British fire. Attacked by double numbers of fresh troops, Beckwith's brigade was thrust back for some distance. But they rallied behind some stone walls of enclosures, just as the shower ceased, and after an obstinate contest of musketry, stopped the French regiments, who, falling into disorder, retired up the slope to re-form. Though conscious that he was now engaged against hopeless odds, and though he could see nothing of Drummond's brigade or the British cavalry, which ought by this time to have come up to his support, Beckwith went up the hill a second time in pursuit. When he reached the crest he came upon the divisional battery of Merle, drove it off, and captured one howitzer. Immediately after, he was outflanked on his left by infantry, apparently the rallied 4th Léger, while on the right he was charged by two squadrons of chasseurs and hussars, all that the depleted cavalry brigade of Pierre Soult could put in line that day. The 43rd and their comrades were hardly pressed, and had to give ground, but sheltering once more among the enclosures, refused to relinquish their position on the slope. The captured howitzer lay out in their front, in an open space swept by the musketry of both parties. Desperate attempts were made by groups on each side to rush out and

bring it in, but to no effect, as the cross-fire was too heavy. Beckwith's brigade was in a most dangerous position, only preserved from annihilation by the fact that the mist and rain prevented the enemy from recognizing the smallness of the force opposed to him—two and a half battalions against eleven, or 1,500 men against 3,500.

At this moment assistance at last arrived—the 2nd Brigade of the Light Division under Drummond appeared on the scene. It consisted of the two battalions of the 52nd, the 1st Caçadores, and four companies of the 95th, about 2,000 bayonets. Having lost touch of the 1st Brigade at the ford, it had taken a route much more like that originally intended by Wellington to be employed, and had come up the back slope of the heights, far to the right of Beckwith, without meeting any enemy. The noise of the combat attracted Drummond to his left; he changed his direction, and was coming over the hillside and approaching Beckwith when he received a most ill-advised order from Erskine—who was with the cavalry some way to his right rear—directing him not to advance or engage[1]. But to have held back would have meant to allow the 1st Brigade to be destroyed. Disregarding the order, Drummond deployed the 1/52nd, the Caçadores, and the 95th on the right of the enclosures where Beckwith was fighting, with the 2/52nd in reserve, and advanced firing. This attack by a fresh force was too much for the French 2nd and 36th, who had suffered severely in the earlier fighting. They gave way, and Drummond, with Beckwith following in échelon on his left, regained the crest of the heights and re-captured the French howitzer. The two brigades were still engaged in a fierce struggle with Merle's division when Reynier brought up the 2nd Brigade of Heudelet's division, the seven battalions of the 17th Léger and 70th Ligne, which had formed the centre of his original line of battle. These troops attacked

[1] This fact comes from a MS. note by Sir John Bell of the 52nd, in my possession. He writes: 'Just as the 2nd Brigade changed its direction, the General, being at some distance, sent an order for it not to engage. But the staff officer who carried it, and Drummond, seeing how matters stood, took the liberty of forgetting the message, so that Beckwith should have the full benefit of the support at hand. No question was ever asked as to the non-delivery of the order.'

the left flank of the Light Division, Beckwith's men, and put them in grave danger, for the much-tried 43rd and 3rd Caçadores were in great disorder. At the same time the two French squadrons charged again upon the flank of the 52nd. Fortunately a stray squadron of the 16th Light Dragoons came up and assisted in repulsing them. This was the only aid given by the cavalry this day; Erskine contrived to keep them useless, countermarching in the mist, some way from the fighting front.

At this moment the fog suddenly lifted, and both Wellington and Reynier were able to make out the face of the battle. The sight was not altogether comforting to either of them: Wellington could see the Light Division on the crest, opposed by a very superior enemy (the proportion was about five to three at this moment) and with their left flank turned by the column which had just come up. Reynier, on the other hand, saw the masses of Picton's and Dunlop's divisions halted close above the fords, at and below Sabugal, and just preparing to cross. He had so stripped his centre and right, while bringing up troops to crush the Light Division, that only the two regiments forming Heudelet's 1st Brigade, the eight weak battalions of the 31st Léger and 47th Ligne, about 3,300 bayonets, were left to occupy two miles of slope on each side of the town of Sabugal. Reynier saw that they must be scattered by the approaching onset, for 10,000 men were hurrying down towards the fords, and gave instant orders for a general retreat. The intact brigade was to abandon Sabugal and the heights, concentrate, and go off at the double, to take up a position a mile to the rear, on the road to Alfayates. Merle's shattered troops on the crest, facing the Light Division, were directed to make off in such order as they might, taking the artillery with them, and to seek refuge behind this reserve. To prevent Beckwith and Drummond from pursuing them, the 2nd Brigade of Heudelet, the 17th Léger and 70th, were ordered to keep up a defensive fight upon the heights where they had just come into action.

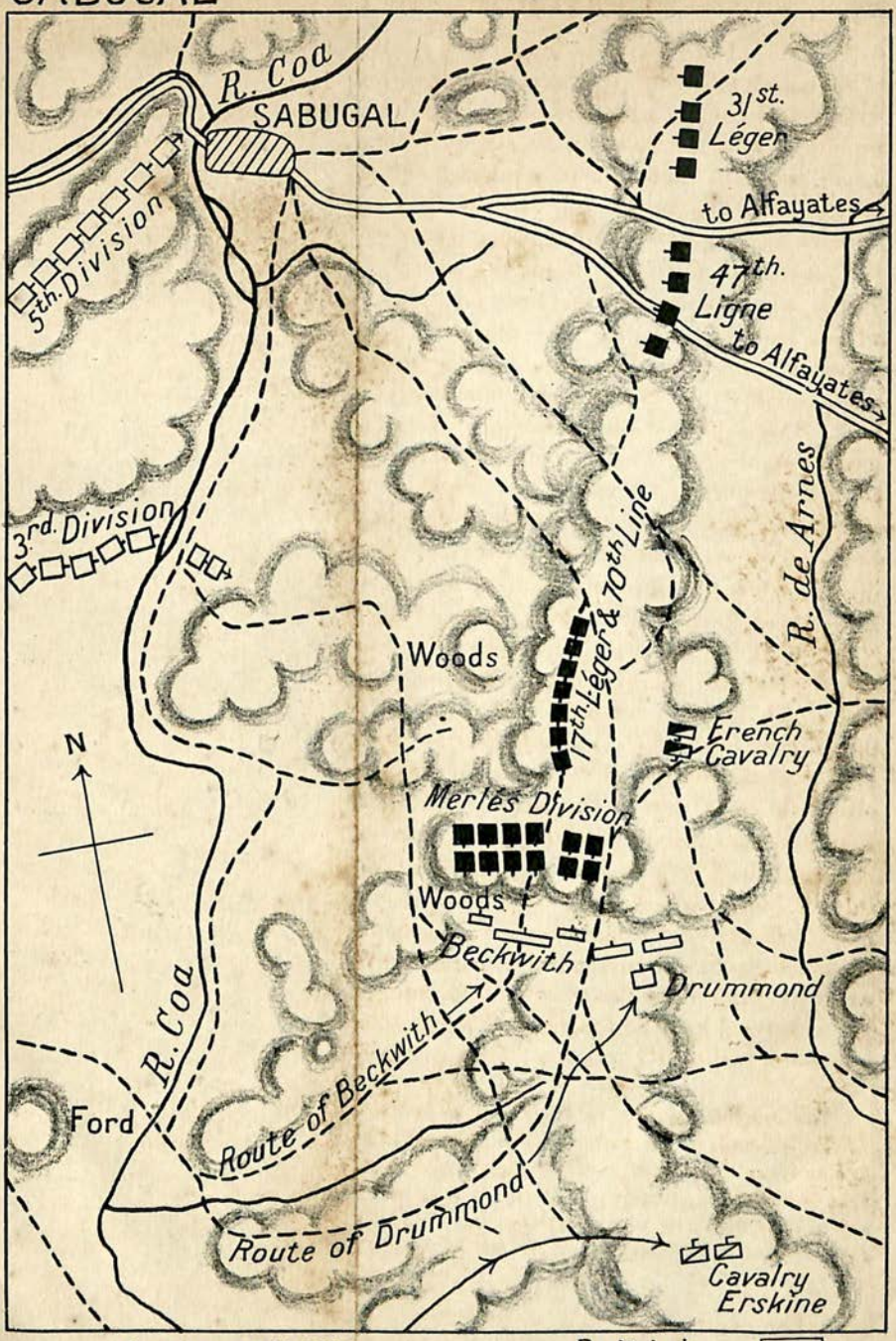
This brigade was thereby exposed to grave danger, for while it was doing its best to 'contain' the Light Division, Picton, coming up from the river at a furious pace, with the 5th Fusiliers deployed in his front, rushed in upon its flank, and drove its battalions one upon another. The 17th and 70th were

overwhelmed and thrust down the back of the hill with a loss of 400 men, of whom 120 were unwounded prisoners. Their wrecks took refuge with the other brigades, which retired as rapidly as they could along the Alfayates road, with the 31st Léger and 47th Ligne, the only intact body, covering the flight of the rest. The British 5th Division had crossed at Sabugal without meeting opposition or losing a man, but was too far to the left to be of any use in urging the pursuit. That duty fell to Picton, who was pressing the French rearguard when the rain, which had been falling for almost the whole morning, became absolutely torrential, and hid the face of the country-side so thoroughly that Wellington commanded the whole army to halt. It is said that this order was given on the false intelligence that the 8th Corps was visible coming up from Alfayates to join Reynier[1], a report for which there was no foundation whatever. Erskine and the cavalry never touched the retreating force, save one squadron of the German hussars, who happed upon the French transport column, and captured the private baggage of Reynier himself and General Pierre Soult[2].

So ended, in comparative disappointment, an operation which would have had glorious results if the fog had not intervened, and which might, even with that drawback, have been much more decisive if Sir William Erskine had shown ordinary prudence and ability. The actual combat, as Wellington truly observed, 'was one of the most glorious that British troops were ever engaged in,' for the Light Division, with its 3,500 bayonets, had fought the whole of the 2nd Corps save one brigade, and had punished its adversaries in the most exemplary style, without suffering any corresponding loss. 'Really these attacks in column against our line are very contemptible,' wrote Wellington to Beresford next morning. The chief glory lay with the 43rd, who fought three separate contests with three successive bodies of opponents, and counted very nearly half

[1] This statement is made by Tomkinson in his diary on April 3, p. 94.

[2] Many details in this narrative of the combat of Sabugal will be found to differ from those given in earlier histories. I have been relying for the French movements largely on the life of General Merle, the officer who was in charge of most of the fighting, and had the best chance of giving a correct story. [Braquehay's *Le Général Merle*, pp. 160–1.]


SABUGAL
R. Coa
SABUGAL
31st. Léger
to Alfayates
5th. Division
47th. Ligne
to Alfayates
3rd. Division
R. de Arnes
17th Léger & 70th Line
Woods
French Cavalry
N
Merles Division
Woods
Beckwith
Drummond
R. Coa
Route of Beckwith
Ford
Route of Drummond
Cavalry Erskine
Scale of ½ Mile
British
French

of the total British loss in their ranks. Beckwith, their brigadier, was the admired of all beholders; eye-witnesses relate with pride how he rode first in the advance and last in the retreat, with blood streaming from a wound on his temple, keeping the men in rank, checking those who showed a tendency to quicken the pace, and directing the fire with perfect coolness. It was in a great degree the confidence inspired by his cheerful and resourceful leading which enabled the brigade to keep up the fight against impossible odds, down to the moment of the arrival of Drummond and the supports upon the scene.

The total loss of the French was 61 officers and 689 men; this fearful proportion of losses in the commissioned ranks was due to the gallantry with which they threw away their lives in bringing up to the front the shaken and demoralized soldiers, who could not face the English musketry. One gun and 186 unwounded prisoners were taken. The British loss was only 169—that of their Portuguese companions no more than 10. Of the total of 179 no less than 143 were men of the Light Division, of whom 80 belonged to the 43rd; Picton's troops, only engaged for a few minutes at the end of the combat, had twenty-five casualties. The horse artillery lost one, the German hussars two men wounded. It is sufficiently clear from these figures who had done the fighting that day [1].

On the afternoon following the combat of Sabugal, Masséna abandoned the line of the Coa, drawing back the 6th Corps to join the other two at Alfayates. Next morning (April 4) at early dawn the whole army made a forced march to the rear, for there seemed every probability that Wellington would appear, to force on a general action, during the course of the day, and it was necessary to avoid the chance of being thrust against the Sierra de Gata, and cut off from Ciudad Rodrigo. Accordingly the 2nd Corps covered more than twenty miles, and did not halt till it had reached Fuentes de Oñoro; the

[1] See the tables of the French and British losses in Appendix No. VI. Fririon, as chief of the staff, must have seen and passed the French return giving 750 casualties, yet in his narrative allows for only 250, saying, 'On a beaucoup exagéré les pertes: les chiffres que nous donnons sont très exacts.' This is only one example of his habit of falsifying figures, in which he rivalled Masséna and Soult.

6th Corps, marching a less distance, halted at Fuente Guinaldo on the direct road to Ciudad Rodrigo. The 8th Corps, on a road between the other two, stopped at Campillo; the reserve cavalry of Montbrun, which was in such bad condition that it had to be covered by the infantry, instead of acting as their screen, drew back to El Bodon, and other villages in the immediate vicinity of Rodrigo. By this movement Masséna recovered his communication with the 9th Corps, which still lay on the Turon near Almeida, for the 2nd Corps was now within fifteen miles of Drouet's head quarters at Val de Mula, while the 6th and 8th Corps covered the roads to Ciudad Rodrigo. On the following day (April 5) the two last-named corps drew back to Carpio, Marialva, and other places within a few miles of that fortress, but the 2nd Corps remained at Fuentes de Oñoro, in order to keep touch with the 9th till the latter should have evacuated a position which had now become dangerous and over-advanced. For if Masséna went back to the Agueda, Drouet could not linger near Almeida, lest he should be cut off from the main army.

Meanwhile Wellington had occupied on the 4th Masséna's old head quarters at Alfayates, and sent forward his cavalry to Albergaria, Alamedilla, and other villages, where they came in touch with the outposts of the 2nd and 8th Corps. The Light Division felt for any traces of the French at Val de Espinha and Quadraseis, and finding none pushed on to Alfayates. The 1st and 3rd Divisions came to that place also on the next day. By that evening (April 5) it was certain that Masséna was falling back to Ciudad Rodrigo, perhaps even further to the rear. The state of his army, of which Wellington had ample evidence from the capture of more sick, stragglers, and baggage during this and the two next days [1], rendered it extremely likely that the French would not be able to halt till they reached their magazines at Salamanca. The British general had no intention of following the enemy far into Spain; he had again outmarched

[1] In the Diary of Tomkinson of the 16th Light Dragoons there is a curious note as to the capture of a 'caravan' or large coach belonging to the head-quarter staff, and more especially to Masséna's Portuguese adviser, the Marquis d'Alorna, on April 7th. Sixty-five infantry were captured by the regiment on the same day.

his supplies, for the new base at Coimbra had only just been established, and convoys from it were coming in slowly and with great delays, since they had to be brought up over the wasted and depopulated region which the French had just evacuated. Till he had some magazines accumulated nearer the frontier, he could not dream of a serious offensive movement into Leon. His letters at this time are full of laments as to the state of the Portuguese troops, especially of the brigades which were fed by their own commissariat. They had dropped so many sick and stragglers in the advance, that on April 8th they were 2,500 short of the number with which they had started from the Lines of Torres Vedras: the brigade in the 5th Division had fallen to 1,061 rank and file from 1,400 with which it had set out—that in the 3rd Division to 1,190 from 1,319. Pack's brigade had been left behind on the Mondego from sheer inability to march, and had not been able to join in the Guarda and Sabugal operations[1]. It was necessary to wait till the ranks were fuller—the men were not lost but left behind exhausted, and could be collected when a systematic supply of food was procurable. The allied army could not dream of entering Spain with the intention of living by plunder and requisitions, as the French habitually did.

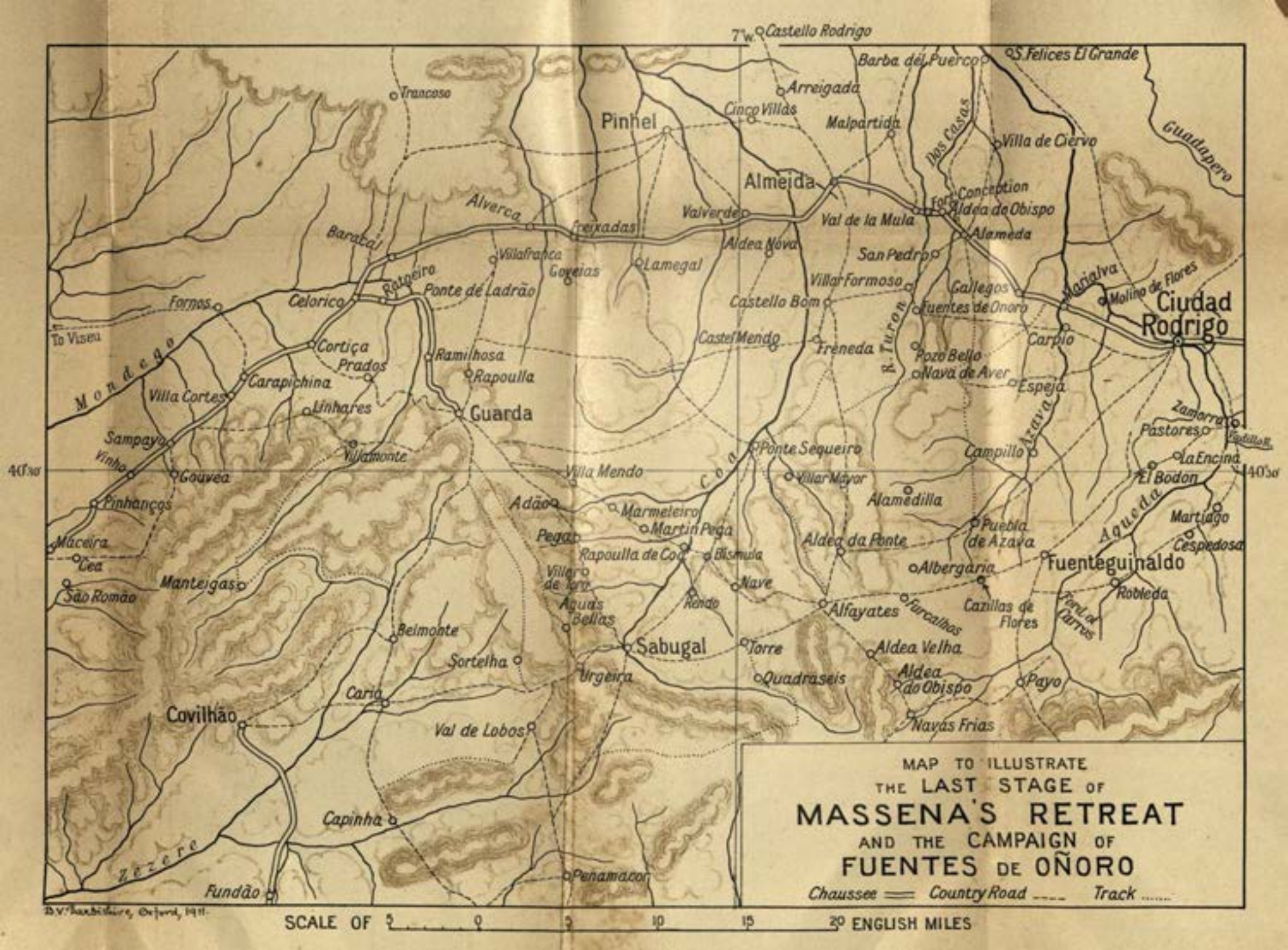
Wellington's ambition at the moment did not go beyond the hope of recovering Almeida, which he conceived to be doomed to fall, and possibly Ciudad Rodrigo also, if the enemy should be forced to fall back towards Salamanca. But Almeida, at least, he was determined to make his own, and the first necessity was to clear away the 9th Corps from its neighbourhood. He was convinced that Drouet would retreat when he heard that Masséna had retired to the Agueda, and thought that his motions might be quickened by a demonstration. The 6th Division and Pack's Portuguese were destined for the blockade of Almeida, but they would not be up for some days, and meanwhile Trant's Militia, which was already on the lower Coa, was directed to push in boldly upon the place, and promised the support of Slade's cavalry brigade on the 7th. Trant, always daring and full of enterprise, pressed forward to Val de Mula, on

[1] See letters to Beresford of April 6th and to Charles Stuart of April 8th, in *Dispatches*, vii. pp. 430–5.

the further side of Almeida, and met there Claparéde's division on its way towards the Agueda—Conroux had already departed. The Militia engaged in an irregular fight with the French, who turned promptly round upon them, and seemed likely to make havoc of them near the village of Aldea do Obispo. But just as the attack grew threatening Slade's dragoons appeared from the south, with Bull's horse artillery battery, and drew up on the flank of the enemy's troops. The artillery were already beginning to enfilade them, when Claparéde, forming his division into battalion squares, made a hasty retreat towards the Agueda, and passed it at the bridge of Barba del Puerco. Erskine, who was in command of the expedition, did not press him hard, and the French, according to their own account, only lost 7 killed and 4 officers and 24 men wounded, all by cannon shot, for the dragoons were not allowed to charge home[1]. Slade captured, however, some baggage and a good many stragglers, marauders, and guards of small convoys, who were surprised in the open rolling country before they could get over the Agueda.

Wellington could now surround and blockade Almeida; he had been nourishing some hopes that the French might evacuate it, when Drouet departed from its neighbourhood, for he was aware that its stores had run very low. But when it became evident that the place was not to be abandoned, he realized that it would take some weeks to reduce it, for he had no battering-train whatever, indeed there were no heavy guns nearer than Oporto and Abrantes. It was not till the following autumn that a proper siege-train was organized for the Anglo-Portuguese army. Almeida could only be attacked by the weapon of famine; Badajoz, which was beleaguered at the same time, had to be battered with a few guns borrowed from the ramparts of the neighbouring fortress of Elvas. The British army had now been two years in Portugal, yet Wellington still lacked the materials for conducting the smallest offensive operation against strongholds in the hands of the French.

[1] Napier (iii. 135) says that the French lost 300 men, which contrasts strangely with the official numbers given by the French. Probably Drouet gave only the actual loss in action, while the British accounts speak of all the stragglers taken that day as if they had been captured in the fight. The 16th certainly got 65 prisoners from a convoy guard.


MAP TO ILLUSTRATE
THE LAST STAGE OF
MASSENA'S RETREAT
AND THE CAMPAIGN OF
FUENTES DE OÑORO
Chaussee
Country Road
Track
SCALE OF 5 0 5 10 15 20 ENGLISH MILES
Castello Rodrigo
Barba del Puerco
S. Felices El Grande
Arreigada
Cinco Villas
Malpartida
Pinhel
Trancoso
Villa de Ciervo
Guadapero
Dos Casas
Almeida
Fort Conception
Aldea do Obispo
Alameda
Alverca
Freixadas
Valverde
Val de la Mula
Baracal
Aldea Nova
San Pedro
Villafranca
Goveias
Lamegal
Ratoeiro
Ponte de Ladrão
Villar Formoso
Gallegos
Marialva
Molino de Flores
Ciudad Rodrigo
Fornos
Celorico
Castello Bom
Fuentes de Onoro
To Viseu
Castel Mendo
Freneda
R. Turon
Carpio
Cortiça
Prados
Ramilhosa
Rapoulla
Pozo Bello
Nava de Aver
Espeja
Mondego
Carapichina
Villa Cortes
Linhares
Guarda
Azava
Zamorra
Pastores
Sampayo
Villamonte
Ponte Sequeiro
Campillo
La Encina
Vinho
Gouvea
Villa Mendo
Coa
Villar Mayor
El Bodon
40°30'
Pinhanços
Adão
Marmeleiro
Alamedilla
Martiago
Maceira
Pega
Martin Pega
Puebla de Azava
Aqueda
Cea
Rapoulla de Coa
Bismula
Aldea da Ponte
Cespedosa
Villar de Toro
Albergaria
Fuenteguinaldo
São Romão
Manteigas
Nave
Aguas Bellas
Rendo
Alfayates
Furcalhos
Cazillas de Flores
Robleda
Belmonte
Sabugal
Torre
Aldea Velha
Sortelha
Urgeira
Quadraseis
Aldea do Obispo
Payo
Cario
Covilhão
Val de Lobos
Navas Frias
Capinha
Zezere
Penamacor
Fundão
B.V. Harbithire, Oxford, 1911.

It was known, however, that the stores in Almeida had run low, for the 9th Corps had been consuming them while it lay close by, in spite of Masséna's strict directions to the contrary. But starvation knows no laws. As a matter of fact there were still over thirty days' rations in the magazines, though it had been reported both to Wellington and to Masséna that the stock had run down much lower ;[1] Drouet had falsely stated on one occasion that there was only enough to last for fifteen days. The British general fancied that four weeks' blockade might reduce the place, and thought that he was quit of the Army of Portugal for a much longer space of time. He even hoped to effect something against Ciudad Rodrigo[2], which was also undervictualled, for on reaching the frontier Masséna had been forced to indent upon it for supplies for his broken host. If the French retired to Salamanca, as seemed quite probable, Wellington had hopes that he might be able to starve out Rodrigo. But he was not intending to throw his troops around it ; they were to remain on the Dos Casas and the Azava, covering the siege of Almeida, but only observing the Spanish fortress with cavalry. For the cutting of the road between it and Salamanca only irregular forces were to be used : Wellington would not send any of his own divisions forward beyond Rodrigo, but requested the daring and resourceful guerrillero chief Julian Sanchez to throw his bands in this direction, the moment that the French army should have retired from the Agueda. Sanchez had been for many months already occupied in similar work, having spent all the winter in raids to cut off convoys and small parties passing from Salamanca to Ciudad Rodrigo, or from that place to Almeida. He had been hunted, often but vainly, by General Thiébault, the governor of the province, whose columns he had usually succeeded in avoiding, while he was always at hand to fall on weak or incautious detachments on the march[3].

[1] Wellington, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 448.

[2] But, as he wrote to Beresford on April 14, 'I was not very sanguine of the results of the blockade of that place, and had indeed determined not to make it in any strength : and now it is useless to keep anybody on the other side of the Agueda save for food and observation.' (*Dispatches*, vii. 457.)

[3] For the state of semi-blockade in which Sanchez had kept Ciudad Rodrigo, see the Memoirs of the Duchess of Abrantes (vii. pp. 275–7), who

On April 8th, as Wellington had expected, the Army of Portugal resumed its march into the interior of the kingdom of Leon, all the three corps passing the Agueda, and retiring, Reynier to San Felices el Grande, Junot to Santi Espiritus, Loison to Alba de Yeltes. Junot, while passing, had been ordered to send into Rodrigo a reinforcement for the garrison; he detached a battalion of the 15th and another of the Irish Legion, which brought up the troops in the place to 3,000 men. From the 8th to the 11th the retreat continued, till at last the 6th Corps went into cantonments at Salamanca, Alba de Tormes, and other neighbouring places, the 2nd at and about Ledesma, and the 8th at Toro, behind the others. Drouet and his two divisions held the line of observation against the Anglo-Portuguese, with head quarters at San Muñoz. So ended, fifty miles within the borders of Spain, the movement that had begun at Santarem and Punhete.

The effective of Masséna's army, was on April 15th 39,546 sabres and bayonets. It had started in September 1810 with 65,050 officers and men, and had numbered 44,407 on March 15th. The exact loss, however, was not the mere difference between its force of September 15, 1810, and of April 15, 1811 (25,504), for it had received at midwinter two drafts under Gardanne and Foy, amounting to 3,225 men in all [1]. On the other hand, the figures of April 15th do not include two convoys of sick sent back into Spain, one of 82 officers and 833 men dispatched under the charge of Drouet from the Alva on March 11, and a second and larger one sent back from Celorico to Almeida on March 22, along with which went some dismounted cavalry, and some artillery which could no longer follow the army. The whole may have amounted to 3,000 men. Both of these convoys dropped large numbers of dead and stragglers by the way, but it is impossible to ascertain their total. We must also deduct the escort of an officer, Major Casabianca, sent from the front to Ciudad Rodrigo

was beleaguered there while her husband was in Portugal. For the hunts organized against him by Thiébault, see the latter's *Memoirs*, iv. 449-51, &c. Sanchez intercepted numbers of dispatches which were of great use to Wellington, as they kept him informed of the state of the French in northern Spain.

[1] See vol. iii, Appendix, p. 543.

on 21st January, who took 400 men [1] with him and never returned. Deducting the 4,315 thus sent back to Spain, and setting them against the 3,225 received from thence, it appears that Masséna's total loss must have been just under 25,000 men, or 38 per cent. of his original force. Of these Wellington had some 8,000 as prisoners, including the 4,000 captured in the hospital of Coimbra on October 7th, 1810. The remainder had perished—not more than 2,000 in action, the rest by the sword of famine. Wellington's scheme had justified itself, though its working out had taken many more weeks than he expected. Nor was the mere loss in men all that the Army of Portugal had suffered. It returned to Leon stripped of everything—without munitions, uniforms, or train. It had lost 5,872 horses of the 14,000 which it had brought into Portugal, and practically all its wheeled vehicles; there were precisely 36 waggons left with the army. The men were still ready to fight fiercely when they saw the necessity for it, but were sulky, discontented, and perpetually carping against the Commander-in-Chief, whose last unhappy inspiration—the projected march from Guarda to Plasencia—had filled up the measure of their wrath. And indeed they had good reason to be disgusted at it, for it was wholly insane and impracticable. But every misfortune of the last six months—the bloody repulse at Bussaco, the loss of the hospitals and magazines at Coimbra, the long starvation at Santarem, the slow and circuitous course of the retreat, was imputed to Masséna's account by his chief subordinates as well as by his rank and file. What the generals muttered in the morning was loudly discussed around every camp-fire at night. The whole army had lost in morale from six months of systematic marauding, was quite out of hand in the way of discipline, and had no confidence in its leader, who was absolutely detested. The departure of Ney, who was liked and admired by all ranks, had been a great discouragement, because his skilful handling of the rearguard during the retreat had been understood and appreciated, while Masséna was cried down as a tactician no less than as a strategist on the general results of the campaign. A general whose

[1] When Foy went back from Thomar on March 5 to Rodrigo his escort was taken from the 9th Corps, not from the Army of Portugal, so does not count. See *Pièces Justificatives*, No. 45, in Foy's *Vie Militaire*, p. 357.

troops no longer rely on him cannot get the best out of his army, and for this reason alone Napoleon was justified in removing the old Marshal from his command in April, when the full tale of the retreat had reached him.

Yet there can be no doubt that Masséna was hardly treated. That the expedition of Portugal failed was, in the main, no fault of his. Neither he nor his master, nor any one else on the French side, had foreseen Wellington's plans—the devastation of the country-side, which rendered it impossible for the invader to live long by marauding, and the systematic fortification of the long front of the Lisbon Peninsula. For the actual game that was set before him, Masséna had not been given sufficient pieces by the Emperor. As Wellington had said more than a year before[1], the French could not turn him out of Portugal with less than 100,000 men, and Napoleon had only provided 65,000. Moreover, as the British general had added, he should so manage affairs that 100,000 French could not live in the country if they did appear; and this was no vain boast.

Masséna, then, was sent to accomplish an impossible task, and his merit was that he came nearer to his end than Wellington had believed possible, before he was forced to recoil. Many of the French marshals would never have got to Coïmbra: certainly none of them would have succeeded in holding on at Santarem for three months. There can be no doubt that the Prince of Essling did not exaggerate when he wrote to Berthier[2], on March 31st, that it was his own iron will alone which had kept the army so long and so far to the front—that but for him it would have recoiled on to Spain many weeks earlier. His heroic obstinacy gave his adversary many an uneasy day, while it seemed in January and February as if the calculation for famishing the French had failed. Masséna, in short, had done all that was possible, and the general failure of the campaign was not his fault, any more than it was that of Soult, on whom the blame has always been laid by the elder marshal's advocates. We have shown in an earlier chapter[3] that Soult did all and more than all that Napoleon had directed him to accomplish. If he

[1] See pp. 167–8 of vol. iii. [2] Dispatch printed in Fririon, p. 157.
[3] See above, pp. 24–5.

had literally obeyed the tardy orders that reached him from Paris he would only have exposed the 5th Corps to defeat, if not to destruction. The *ex post facto* rebukes that the Emperor sent him were unjust. We are once more driven back to our old conclusion that the determining factors in the failure of the campaign of Portugal were firstly that Napoleon refused to appoint a single commander-in-chief in the Peninsula, to whose orders all the other marshals should be strictly subordinate, and secondly that he persisted in sending plans and directions from Paris founded on facts that were seven weeks late, or more, when his dispatches reached the front. On this we have enlarged at sufficient length on an earlier page.

SECTION XXV

EVENTS IN NORTHERN, EASTERN, AND CENTRAL SPAIN

CHAPTER I

KING JOSEPH AND HIS TROUBLES

WHILE following the fortunes of Wellington and Masséna, during the first four months of 1811, we have been compelled to leave almost untouched the sequence of events in the rest of Spain; not only the doings of Suchet and Macdonald in the far east, which had no practical connexion with the campaign of Portugal, but also the minor affairs of the southern and central provinces. Only Soult's expedition to Estremadura, which came into close touch with Wellington, has been dealt with. It is time to explain the general posture of the war in the Peninsula, during the time when its critical point lay between Lisbon and Abrantes, where Masséna and Wellington stood face to face, each waiting for the other to move.

What was going on in Portugal was, as we have already seen, practically a secret to the French in Spain. For the Portuguese Ordenança and the Spanish guerrilleros had done their work of blocking the roads so well, that no accurate information penetrated to Madrid, Valladolid, or Seville from Santarem. It was only at rare intervals, when Foy and other officers cut their way through this 'fog of war' that the condition of affairs on the Tagus became known for a moment. The fog descended again when they had passed through on their way to Paris, and given their information as to the fortunes of the Army of Portugal during the weeks that preceded their departure. The gaps in the narrative were very long—nothing got through between the departure of Masséna from Almeida on September 15, 1810, and Foy's first arrival at Ciudad Rodrigo on November 8th,

There was another lacuna in the knowledge of the situation between that date and the passage of Masséna's second successful messenger, Casabianca, from Santarem to Rodrigo in the earliest days of February. And after Casabianca had passed by, the next news came out through Foy's second mission, when he started to announce the oncoming retreat on March 5, and got to the borders of Leon on March 13. The only way in which King Joseph at Madrid, or the generals of the 'military governments' of Old Castile, or Soult in Andalusia, felt the course of the war on its most important theatre, was that they were for many months freed from any anxiety about the movements of Wellington. He was 'contained' by Masséna, and, however he might be faring, he had no power to interfere by armed force in the affairs of Spain. The French for all this time had to deal only with the armies of the Cortes, and with their old and irrepressible enemies the guerrilleros of the mountains.

While the fate of the Portuguese expedition was still uncertain, while it seemed possible to Napoleon that Masséna might cling to his position at Santarem till Soult came up to join him on the Tagus, a considerable change was made with regard to the French troops in northern Spain. Convinced at last there was little to be said in favour of that system of many small 'military governments', in Old Castile and the neighbouring provinces, which he had created in 1810, the Emperor resolved to put them all under a single commander. This would give him six less independent generals to communicate with, and would ensure for the future a much better co-operation between the divisions which occupied the valley of the Douro and the Pyrenean regions. The six military governors had been each playing his own game, and taking little notice of that of his neighbours. Their enemies were mostly the guerrillero bands of the Cantabrian hills and of Navarre. Each general did his best to hunt these elusive enemies out of his own department, but took little heed of their trespasses on his neighbours' territory. Evasive and indomitable partisans like Mina in Navarre, Julian Sanchez in Old Castile, and Porlier and Longa in the Cantabrian sierras, found it comparatively easy to shift their positions when the pressure on one region was too great for them, and to move on into another—they were sure that the hunt would soon slacken, and that they

could return at their leisure to their old haunts. The Emperor thought that it would be possible to make an end of them, if all his garrisons and movable columns in northern Spain were put under a single commander and moved in unison under a single will. Hence came the decree of January 8, 1811, creating the 'Army of the North,' and handing it over to Marshal Bessières, whose name was still remembered in those regions owing to his old victory of Medina de Rio Seco. His authority extended over the troops stationed in Navarre, Biscay, Burgos, Valladolid, Salamanca, the Asturias, and Santander, including not only the regular garrisons of those provinces but the two divisions of the Young Guard, which had replaced Drouet's corps in Old Castile, and the division under Serras which watched Galicia from the direction of Benavente and Astorga. The total of the forces placed under his orders amounted to 70,000 men, of whom 59,000 were 'présents sous les armes,' the rest being in hospital, or detached outside the limits of the territory assigned to the Army of the North.

Considerable as was this force, it did not accomplish all that the Emperor hoped, even when directed by a single commander of solid military talents. Bessières, though a capable officer, was not a genius, and the tasks assigned to him were so multifarious that after a short time he began to grow harassed and worried, and to cavil at every order that was sent him. He was directed to 'suppress brigandage,' i. e. to put down the guerrilleros, to support the Army of Portugal against Wellington whenever necessary, to keep an eye upon the Spanish regular forces in Galicia and the Asturias. This, he declared, was more than could be accomplished with the forces at his disposal. 'If I concentrate 20,000 men all communications are lost, and the insurgents will make enormous progress. The coast would be lost as far as Bilbao. We are without resources, because it is only with the greatest pains that the troops can be fed from day to day. The spirit of the population is abominably bad: the retreat of the Army of Portugal has turned their heads. The bands of insurgents grow larger, and recruit themselves actively on every side. . . . The Emperor is deceived about Spain: the pacification of Spain does not depend on a battle with the English, who will accept it or refuse it as they please, and who have Portugal

behind them for retreat. Every one knows the vicious system of our operations. Every one allows that we are too widely scattered. We occupy too much territory, we use up our resources without profit and without necessity: we are clinging on to dreams. Cadiz and Badajoz absorb all our means—Cadiz because we cannot take it, Badajoz because it requires a whole army to support it. We ought to blow up Badajoz, and to abandon the siege of Cadiz for the present. We ought to draw in, get solid bases for our magazines and hospitals, and regard two-thirds of Spain as a vast battlefield, which a battle may give us or cause us to lose, till the moment that we change our system and take in hand the real conquest and pacification of the country,' &c.[1]

All this means that Bessières found it impossible to pacify the North, and concluded that it was useless to try to complete the conquest of Andalusia or Portugal, when that of Navarre and Santander was so far from being secure that no small party could go two miles from a garrison town, without a large probability of being cut off by the insurgents. He would have had his master abandon Andalusia and Estremadura, in order to concentrate such masses of troops in the north that the guerrilleros should be smothered by mere numbers, that every mountain village should have its garrison. There was small likelihood that his views would find favour at Paris; the Emperor knew well enough the effect on his prestige that would result from the abandonment of the siege of Cadiz, following upon the retreat of Masséna from Santarem. It would look like a confession of defeat, a renunciation of the great game of conquest; if the French armies retired beyond the Sierra Morena, the results of eighteen months of victorious campaigning in the south would be lost, and the Cortes at Cadiz would once more have a realm to administer. Hence all that Napoleon did for Bessières was to send him in June two new divisions for the strengthening of the garrisons of the North[2], and to bid him fortify every important station on the high-road to Madrid, and even the main bridges of the upper Ebro. A few months later he recalled him, partly

[1] Bessières to Berthier, printed in the Appendix to Belmas, vol. i. p. 562.

[2] See below, p. 225. Divisions Souham and Caffarelli.

because he considered him a pessimist, partly because Bessières quarrelled with King Joseph, who was continually soliciting his removal. But before the Duke of Istria departed he had many more troubles to go through, as will be seen.

The main difficulties of the Army of the North arose from geographical facts. While the plains of Leon and Old Castile could be scoured by cavalry, and easily traversed by flying columns, so that it was not impossible to keep some sort of order in them, this flat upland was bordered on the north by the long chain of the Cantabrian sierras and their foot-hills, broad, rugged, and nearly roadless. Behind these again lay the narrow and difficult coast-land of Asturias and Santander, cut up into countless petty valleys each drained by its own small river, and parted from its neighbours by spurs of the great sierras. How was this mountain region, seventy miles broad and two hundred long, to be dealt with? The French had no permanent garrisons on the coast between Gihon, the port of Oviedo, which was generally occupied by a detachment of Bonnet's division, and Santander, not far from the borders of Biscay[1]. This last Bessières describes as 'a bad post from every point of view, only to be defended by covering it with large bodies of troops,' and only accessible by a series of difficult defiles. In the Cantabrian highlands dwelt Longa and Porlier, with bands which had assumed the proportions of small armies; they could communicate with the sea at any one of a dozen petty ports, and draw arms and supplies from the British cruisers of the Bay of Biscay. Even Mina would occasionally get in touch with the sea through this coast-land, though his main sphere of operations was in Navarre. There were dozens of smaller bands, each based on its own valley, but capable of joining its neighbours for a sudden stroke. Again and again French columns worked up into these sierras from the plain of the Douro, and went on a hunt after the patriots. Sometimes they caught them and inflicted severe loss; more often they were eluded by their enemies, who fled by paths that regular troops could not follow, into some distant corner of the mountains. It was impossible to garrison each upland valley with a force that could resist a general levy of the insur-

[1] Bessières soon after his arrival put a garrison in Santoña, between Santander and Bilbao.

gents. Even little towns like Potes, in the Liebana, Longa's usual head quarters, which were repeatedly taken, could not be kept. The 'Army of the North' would have required 150,000 men instead of the 70,000 whom Bessières actually commanded, if it was to master the whole of this difficult region. Indeed, Cantabria could only have been conquered by an enemy possessing a sea force to attack it in the rear, and occupy all its little ports, as well as an overwhelming land army operating from all sides. To the end of the war Longa and Porlier, often hunted but never destroyed, maintained themselves without any great difficulty in their fastnesses. Nothing but the general despair and demoralization that might have followed the extinction of the patriotic cause in the whole of the rest of Spain, could have brought the war in this region to an end. Nothing of the kind occurred: the Cantabrians kept a high spirit; they won many small successes, and they were perpetually helped by the British from the side of the sea. Bessières had a hopeless problem before him in this quarter, considering the size of his army.

But this was not his only trouble; Bonnet in Asturias was holding Oviedo and the district immediately round it with a strong division, which varied at one time and another from 6,000 to 8,000 men. He was very useful in his present position, because he cut the Spanish line of defence along the north coast in two, and because he seemed to threaten Galicia from the north-east. The threat was not a very real one, for he had not enough men to deliver an attack on eastern Galicia and at the same time to hold Oviedo and its neighbourhood. But he was a source of trouble as well as of strength to his superiors, for it was very difficult to keep in touch with him through the pass of Pajares, and if he were to be attacked at once by the Galicians and by a British landing-force, his position would be a very dangerous one. He had been put to great trouble by Renovales's naval expedition in October 1810[1], though this was but a small force and had not received any real help from Galicia along the land side. Bessières, after he had been a few months in authority, was inclined to withdraw Bonnet to the south side of the sierras, and to abandon Oviedo, but was warned against such a move by his master, who said that this would be 'a detestable opera-

[1] See vol. iii. pp. 486–7.

tion,' as it would relieve Galicia from the threat of invasion, allow of the re-formation of a Junta and an army in Asturias, and necessitate a heavy concentration at Santander[1]. Nevertheless the Marshal did at one crisis withdraw the division from Oviedo.

Between Bonnet in the Asturias and Ciudad Rodrigo, the long front against Galicia was occupied by a single weak French division, that of Serras, whose head quarters were at Benavente, his advanced post at Astorga, and his flank-guards at Leon and Zamora[2]. If the army of Galicia had been in good order this force would have been in great danger, for it was not strong enough to hold the ground allotted to it. But when Del Parque in 1809 drew off to Estremadura the old Army of the North, he had left behind him only a few skeleton corps, and the best of these had been destroyed in defending Astorga in the following year. The formation of a new Galician army of 20,000 men had been decreed, and the *cadres* left behind in the country had been filled up in 1810, but the results were not satisfactory. The Captain-General, Mahy, was a man of little energy, and spent most of it in quarrels with the local Junta, whom he accused of conspiracy against him, and charged with secret correspondence with La Romana and his party. He seized their letters in the post and imprisoned two members, whereupon riots broke out, and complaints were sent to the Regency at Cadiz. This led to Mahy's recall, and the captain-generalship was given to the Duke of Albuquerque, then on his mission to London. He died without having returned to Spain, so that the appointment was nugatory, and the Regency then gave it to Castaños, who was at the same time made Captain-General of Estremadura, after the death of La Romana and the disaster at the Gebora. Castaños went to the Tagus, to rally the poor remnants of the Estremaduran army, and while retaining the nominal command in Galicia never visited that province, but deputed the command in it to Santocildes, the young general who had so bravely defended Astorga in the preceding spring. He had been sent prisoner to France, but was adroit enough to escape

[1] *Correspondance*, no. 17,785, 8th June, 1811.

[2] Since the disaster at Puebla de Senabria (vol. iii. p. 270) Serras had drawn in his left flank and abandoned the Galician foot-hills.

from his captivity, and to make his way back to Corunna. His appointment was popular, but he got no great service out of the Galician army, which was in a deplorable condition, and hopelessly scattered. The Junta kept many battalions to garrison the harbour-fortresses of Corunna, Vigo, and Ferrol, and the main body, whose head quarters lay at Villafranca in the Vierzo, did not amount to more than 7,000 men, destitute of cavalry (which Galicia could never produce) and very poorly provided with artillery. There was another division, under General Cabrera, some 4,000 strong, at Puebla de Senabria, and a third under Barcena and Losada on the borders of the Asturias, opposite Bonnet. The whole did not amount to 16,000 raw troops—yet this was sufficient to hold Serras in observation and to watch Bonnet, who was too much distracted by the Cantabrian bands to be really dangerous. But in the spring of 1811 the Galicians could do no more, and Wellington was much chagrined to find that he could get no effective assistance from them, after he had driven Masséna behind the Agueda, and so shaken the hold of the French on the whole kingdom of Leon. It was not till June that Santocildes found it possible to descend from the hills and threaten Serras. This led to a petty campaign about Astorga and on the Orbigo river, which will be narrated in its due place.

While affairs stood thus in the north, King Joseph and his 'Army of the Centre' were profiting for many months from the absence of any danger upon the side of Portugal. Indeed, the period between September 1810 and April 1811 were the least disturbed of any in the short and troublous reign of the *Rey Intruso*, so far as regular military affairs went. There was no enemy to face save the guerrilleros, yet these bold partisans, of whom the best known were the Empecinado and El Medico (Dr. Juan Palarea) on the side of the eastern mountains, and Julian Sanchez more to the west, on the borders of Leon, sufficed to keep the 20,000 men of whom King Joseph could dispose [1]

[1] The King in all his dispatches seems to understate his own force. He sometimes calls it only 15,000 men. But a muster roll of the Army of the Centre, which I have copied from the Archives de la Guerre, for February 15, 1811, shows a total of 20,000, viz. Dessolles, 3,300, German Division, 5,200, Spaniards, 4,200, Lahoussaye, 2,500, Treillard's Light Cavalry, 1,400, Artillery Train, Sappers, &c., 1,500, Royal Guards, 2,000

in constant employment. Such a force was not too much when every small town, almost every village, of New Castile had to be provided with a garrison. Roughly speaking, each province absorbed a division: the Germans of the *Rheinbund* occupied La Mancha, Lahoussaye's dragoons and the incomplete division of Dessolles[1] held Toledo and its district, the King's Spaniards the Guadalajara country, leaving only the Royal Guards and some drafts and detachments to garrison the capital. It was with considerable difficulty that Joseph collected in January 1811 a small expeditionary force of not over 3,500 men[2], with which Lahoussaye went out, partly to open up communications with Soult in Estremadura, but more especially to search for any traces of the vanished army of Masséna in the direction of the Portuguese frontier. Lahoussaye started from Talavera on February 1, communicated by means of his cavalry with Soult's outposts between Truxillo and Merida, and then went northward across the Tagus to Plasencia, from which his cavalry searched in vain, as far as Coria and Alcantara, for any news of the Army of Portugal. From Plasencia he was soon driven back to Toledo by want of supplies. Joseph had directed him to seize Alcantara, re-establish its broken bridge, and place a garrison there; but this turned out to be absolutely impossible, for it would have been useless to leave a small force in this remote spot, when it was certain that it must ere long retire for lack of food, and might well be cut off by the guerrilleros before it could reach Talavera, the nearest occupied point[3].

The Army of the Centre just sufficed to occupy the kingdom of New Castile, and was unable to do more. At least, however, it could maintain its position, and was in no danger. The King was even able to make state visits to places in the close neighbourhood of Madrid, such as Alcala and Guadalajara[4], and

of all arms. In addition there were 5,000 drafts for Soult detained in New Castile, but about to start for Seville.

[1] Which had only seven battalions, the rest being with Soult in Andalusia.

[2] Composed of two cavalry regiments of Marisy's brigade, three German battalions from La Mancha, and two French battalions.

[3] Napoleon in a dispatch of 22 March (*Correspondance*, xxi. 496) blames Lahoussaye for not stopping in northern Estremadura, in touch with Soult.

[4] See Miot de Melito's *Mémoires*, iii. 153-6.

seems to have regarded the possibility of such a modest tour as a sign of the approaching pacification of this region.

But just at the moment when Joseph Bonaparte's military situation was safe, if not satisfactory, he was passing through a diplomatic crisis which absorbed all his attention and reduced him to the verge of despair. We have already alluded, in an earlier chapter, to Napoleon's insane resolve to annex all Spain beyond the Ebro to the French Empire [1], in return for which he was proposing to hand over Portugal, when it should be conquered, to his brother. The proclamation announcing this strange resolve, which was to make Frenchmen of Mina and all the guerrilleros of Navarre, no less than of the Catalan armies which were still striving so hard against Macdonald, was delayed in publication. For the Emperor wished to wait till Lisbon was in the hands of Masséna, before he made known his purpose. But Joseph was aware that the proclamation had been drawn up, and had been sent out to the governors of the northern provinces, who were only waiting for orders to issue it. The news that the English had evacuated Portugal might any day arrive, and would be the signal for the dismemberment of Spain. He had sent in succession to Paris his two most trusted Spanish adherents, the Duke of Santa-Fé and the Marquis of Almenara, to beg the Emperor to forgo his purpose; all was to no effect. Santa-Fé came back in December absolutely crushed by the reception that he had been given; the Emperor had delivered to him an angry diatribe, in which he complained that his brother forgot that he was a French prince, and remarked that 'many other European sovereigns, who had received much harder measure, did not make nearly so much noise about it as the King of Spain [2].' Almenara reached Madrid about a week later to report an equally characteristic interview with Napoleon. He had been directed to inform his master that he should be given one more chance. Let him open negotiations with the Cortes at Cadiz, making them the offer that if they would recognize him as King of Spain, he would recognize them as lawful representatives of the nation, and rule them according to the

[1] See vol. iii. pp. 506–7.

[2] See Miot's *Mémoires*, iii. 160, for the discouraging results of this embassy.

constitution drawn up at Bayonne. Cadiz and the other fortresses held by the troops of the Regency must open their gates, and Napoleon would then promise to make no annexations of Spanish soil; he would even guarantee the integrity of the kingdom. If the Cortes refused to treat, the Emperor would regard himself as free from any previous engagements made with his brother or the Spanish nation. The provinces beyond the Ebro would become part of France. He added that if affairs in Portugal went badly, it would not be wise to open negotiations with Cadiz at all, for fear that the Spaniards might take the mere fact that proposals had been made to them as a token of growing fear and depression on the part of Joseph.

The King and his ministers knew well the impracticability of making any offer to the government of Cadiz, which (with all its faults and internal dissensions) was determined to fight to the death, and had never shown the least intention of recognizing Napoleon's nominee as King of Spain. They looked upon the scheme as merely a preliminary to the publication of the edict for the annexation of the provinces beyond the Ebro. King Joseph was to be made to demonstrate his own futility, since he would receive an angry and contemptuous reply, or no reply at all, and it would then be open to his brother to declare that the attempt to govern a united Spain by a king had failed, and that it was necessary to dismember it—perhaps to cut it up into a number of French military governments. This seems to have been Joseph's own impression; in the council at which the Emperor's proposal was discussed, he broke out into violent reproaches and bitter complaints against his brother, and explained with tears to his ministers that he and they were betrayed. He was now for abdicating, and this would have been the most dignified course to take. He talked of buying an estate in France, and settling down, far from Paris, as a private person. He had indeed charged his wife's nephew, Marius Clary, to cross the Pyrenees, and purchase a castle and lands for him in Touraine or the South, where he might hide his disgrace and disappointment.

This move provoked Napoleon's wrath. He signified his displeasure. 'The members of the Imperial family could not legally make any acquisition of land in France without the

formal consent of the Emperor. In addition, it was impossible for the King of Spain, or the commander of the Army of the Centre, to quit his post without having received the Imperial authorization. Painful as the declaration must be, if the King took such a hazardous step, he should be arrested at Bayonne on crossing the frontier. There must be no more talk about the constitution of Bayonne: the Emperor could dispose of Spain at his good pleasure, and in the interests of the French Empire alone.' If Joseph persisted in the idea of abdication, he must first make a formal statement to that effect to the French ambassador at Madrid, and, provided that it was considered that the step would cause no dangerous results, nor give rise to any slanderous reports, he might come to his estate of Morfontaine near Paris and 'finish the matter *en règle*[1].'

Joseph at first seemed inclined to accept any terms by which he might emerge from his present ignominious position, and actually had several interviews with Laforest, in which they discussed the drafting of a deed of abdication. But it seemed that Napoleon would prefer the prolongation of the present state of affairs, and for his own purposes intended that a puppet king should continue at Madrid. By the ambassador's advice the document ultimately took the shape of a letter in which Joseph, instead of abdicating in definitive form, merely stated his wish to do so, and referred it to his brother. His confidant, Miot de Melito, with whom he talked over the whole matter, expresses his opinion that at the last moment the fascination of the crown overpowered his master's full sense of resentment. 'The King's note was a good piece of writing, but I consider that it did not state clearly enough that the course to which he inclined, and which he preferred to all others, was abdication. I wished that he had made a stronger affirmation of this, and told him so, but to no effect. It was easy to see that the name of King had still a powerful attraction, from which Joseph could

[1] All this from the letter of the Queen of Spain, detailing her interview with the Duc de Cadore, who sent for her in the Emperor's name on January 15, 1811, and administered this bitter message to her, for her husband's benefit. See the letter given in Miot's *Mémoires*, iii. 171-2. Cf. Napoleon's dispatch to Laforest, ambassador at Madrid, *Correspondance*, 17,111.

not escape, and I wondered at the glamour and intoxication which (as it seems) hangs about supreme power, since the mere shadow of that power could overweigh with him so many rebuffs and so much resentment[1].'

Napoleon made no reply to his brother's declaration; he had no intention of taking over the formal responsibility for the government of Spain, and preferred to leave another to answer for all its obvious injustices and oppressions. Affairs were at a standstill for some months, till in April Joseph, taking the opportunity of a formal invitation to become one of the godfathers of the newly-born King of Rome, the heir of the Empire, made a sudden and unauthorized sally to Paris. He started from Madrid on April 23, accompanied by nine of his courtiers and ministers, and crossed the Bidassoa into France on May 10. He made no halt at Bayonne, lest he should be stopped there by orders from his brother, and when, at Dax in Gascony, he received an Imperial dispatch forbidding him to quit Spain, he was able to plead that it was too late to act upon it. Pursuing his journey night and day, he presented himself at Paris on May 15th, and announced to Napoleon that he was come to discharge in person the honourable duties of god-parent at the approaching baptism of his nephew.

Though annoyed at the King's arrival, for refusals and evasions of a brother's petitions are transacted more easily by letter than face to face, the Emperor thought it well to make no open show of displeasure, and accepted all the explanations given to him. There followed a series of interviews at Rambouillet, in which Joseph allowed himself to be talked out of his project of abdication: for the Emperor declared that he found him useful in his present position, and informed him that it was his duty, as a brother and a French prince, to obey the directions of the head of his house. In return Napoleon promised to make many arrangements which would render the King's position less intolerable than it had been for the last year. He would provide him with a monthly subsidy of a million francs from the French treasury, of which half would be for the sustenance of his court and ministers, and the other half for the pay of the Army of the

[1] Miot's *Mémoires*, iii. 176.

Centre. Orders were issued to Soult, commanding the Army of Andalusia, Bessières, commanding the newly-formed Army of the North, and Suchet, so far as the Army of Aragon was concerned (but not for Catalonia), by which they were directed to pay over to a commissary appointed by Joseph one quarter of the gross revenues which they were raising in the districts which they occupied. They were also directed to leave the law courts in the King's hands, and not to allow judgements to be given in the name of the Emperor. It was this last practice, frequently adopted by Kellermann in Castile, which had irritated Joseph more than any other misdemeanour of the local commandants.

What Joseph most desired, a real directing power over the movements of all the French troops in Spain, was not given him. But he was granted a sort of illusory superintending authority: if he was at the head quarters of any of the armies, he was to be given the honours of supreme command; all the marshals and generals commanding armies were to send him frequent reports, and not to undertake any operations without informing him of them. 'The King must have reports of everything that happens; he must know everything, and be able to act in his central position as a sort of agency for transmitting information to the generals. This communication of intelligence, observations, and advice may even take place through his Spanish Minister of War[1],' wrote the Emperor. The King flattered himself that this meagre concession gave him something like a directing authority over the armies. He told his courtiers that he was given the position of General-in-Chief[2], and used his brother's permission to send advice in reams to each of the local commanders. Unfortunately there was no way of making them take this advice; they answered more or less politely, showing reasons why they could not follow it, and went on their own ways as before. It was to no effect that Joseph got leave to have his old friend Marshal Jourdan sent back to him, first as governor of Madrid, and later as chief of the staff. He flattered himself

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, from Caen, May 27. *Correspondance*, no. 17,752.

[2] See Miot de Melito's *Mémoires*, iii. 197–8, and compare it with the actual terms of Napoleon's concession given in his letter to Berthier quoted above.

that his dispatches would be taken more seriously by Soult or Suchet when they came countersigned by a marshal of France. But he erred, for the younger commanders looked upon Jourdan as effete and past his prime—nor were they altogether wrong.

Nothing can be more curious than the Emperor's memorandum to Berthier, which directs him to lay these conditions before Joseph. 'I am thus,' he writes, 'satisfying the desires which the King expressed to me, save on the single point of the supreme command over my troops. I cannot give away that supreme command, because I do not see any man capable of managing the troops, and yet the command ought to be one and indivisible. In the note which the King gave me, all the arrangements were complex and confused. It is in the nature of things that if one marshal were placed at Madrid, and directed all operations, he would want to have all the glory along with all the responsibility. The commanders of the Armies of the South and of Portugal would think themselves under the orders not so much of the King as of that marshal, and in consequence would not give him obedience. . . . My intention is to make no change whatever in the military command, neither with the Army of the North, nor the Army of Aragon, nor the Army of the South, nor the Army of Portugal, save so much as is necessary to secure for the King reports from them all. . . . I want to do all that I can to give the King a new prestige on his return to Spain, but nothing that may in any way disorganize the Army of Andalusia, or any of the other armies[1].'

It is clear that we have in these few sentences the key to all Napoleon's difficulties in conducting the Spanish war. He did not wish to 'have a marshal at Madrid who would want to have all the glory along with all the responsibility,' i. e. he refused to make one of his servants dangerously great. Soult's intrigues for kingship at Oporto in 1809 were not forgotten, and Soult would have been the obvious candidate for supreme command, now that Masséna had been tried and found wanting. The Emperor preferred to go on with the hopeless system that was already working, by which he himself directed operations from

[1] All from the Caen memorandum for Berthier quoted above.

Paris, basing his orders on facts that were often a month old when he learnt of them, and sending out those orders to reach their destination another month later. He was aware of the evils of this arrangement, but anything was better than to hand over supreme power over 300,000 soldiers to a single lieutenant. It is strange that he did not resolve to descend into Spain himself during the summer of 1811, for European politics were at the moment so quiet that he was actually thinking of concentrating 80,000 men at Boulogne, for a real or a threatened descent on the British Isles [1], a project which he had not been able to dream of since Trafalgar. The tension between France and Russia, which was to increase in a dangerous fashion during the autumn, was not so great in May or June as to make the idea of a Spanish campaign impossible. If it was possible to think of an invasion of England at this moment, it was surely equally feasible to consider the advantages of a descent on Lisbon or Cadiz. But apparently it was the physical distance between Paris and the further end of the Peninsula which deterred the Emperor from seizing what turned out to be the last available opportunity for a sally beyond the Pyrenees. As he himself observed on another occasion, he would be at the end of the world in Portugal, and a crisis might arise behind his back before he got any adequate news of it [2]. This was different from campaigning in central Europe; when at Vienna or Berlin he was still in touch with Paris. The only parallel to an invasion of Portugal would be an invasion of Russia, and it will be remembered that Napoleon's apprehensions were absolutely justified by what occurred in the autumn of 1812 during his absence at Moscow. The astounding conspiracy of General Malet was within an ace of succeeding,

[1] For dispatches concerning this, and notes as to the troops and ships to be employed, see *Correspondance*, 17,824, 17,875, &c. The project seems to have been seriously thought over, the Emperor wrongly believing that England was stripped of regular troops.

[2] 'Le Portugal est trop loin: je ne peux pas y aller; il faudrait six mois. Pendant six mois tout est suspendu: l'Europe est sans direction: les Russes peuvent se déclarer, les Anglais débarquer au nord. En vérité, quand on voit la différence qu'un homme met aux événements, il est impossible de ne pas avoir de l'amour propre.' 30th March, 1811. Napoleon's interview with Foy, reported by the latter in *Vie Militaire du Général Foy*, p. 140.

because it was possible to put about all manner of false rumours, when the Emperor was lost to sight on the steppes. A handful of plotters—we might almost say a single plotter, Malet himself—with no assets save impudence and reckless courage, seized the imperial ministers, mustered an armed force, and almost established a provisional government and mastered Paris. This was only possible because the Emperor and the grand army had got so far off that the touch between them and France had been lost, and absence of news for many days had set the tongue of rumour loose [1]. Under such circumstances almost anything might happen, for imposing as was the Colossus of the French Empire, it stood on no firm base, its feet were of clay. Napoleon hoped to build a permanent structure, but there can be no doubt that all through his reign its stability depended on his own life and strength. If he had been cut off suddenly by a cannon-ball at Jena or Wagram, or by the knife of a fanatic such as Staps—Spain could have produced such enthusiasts by the score—chaos would have supervened in France. When once the rumour was set about that the Emperor was dead, anything became possible in Paris. No one knew this better than himself; in his cynical moments he would remark to his confidants that he was well aware that if sudden death came to him the public feeling would be one of relief rather than of sorrow. It was the constraining force of his own indomitable will alone which kept everything together, and if he removed himself to some very remote corner of Europe, from which his orders could not be transmitted continuously and at short intervals, there was grave danger that the machine might run down.

Hence it may perhaps be said that the Peninsula was saved from the presence of the Emperor in 1811 because of the necessary limitations of a one-man power. He dared not remove himself from the centre of affairs; he would not make one of his jealous and ambitious lieutenants over-great, by giving him supreme command. This being so, the bad old system had to go on, and that system of over-late orders grounded on over-late information [2], and followed (or not followed) by over-late

[1] For a similar hint of danger in 1809, see above, vol. i. pp. 560-61.

[2] Sometimes on absolutely false information, due to the Emperor's vast

execution, was bound to fail, when the enemy's movements were guided by the cool and resolute brain of Wellington. More than once Napoleon wrote in a petulant mood to complain that it was absurd that all his Spanish armies should be detained and kept in check by a mere 30,000 British troops [1]; he refused for a long time to take the Portuguese seriously, and would only reckon the Spanish guerrilleros as 'brigands' or 'canaille.' What he failed to see was that a small army worked by a general on the spot, who had minute local knowledge and admirable foresight, was necessarily superior to a much larger force directed by orders from a distance, and commanded by several marshals who were bitterly jealous of each other. Moreover he never thoroughly comprehended the way in which the movements of his armies were delayed by the fact that they were moving in a country where every peasant was their enemy, where provisions could only be collected by armed force, and where no dispatch would reach its destination unless it were guarded by an escort of from 50 to 250 men. And he refused to see that a division or an army corps was in Spain practically no more than the garrison of the province which it occupied—that, if it moved, that province immediately became hostile soil again, and would have to be reconquered. He was always prescribing the concentration of large bodies of men, by means of the evacuation of places or regions of secondary importance [2]. His marshals, knowing the

distance from the theatre of war leading him to make hypotheses which had been falsified, because of the mistaken premises on which he grounded them. For example, on March 30, 1811, he told Berthier that Masséna's head quarters were at Coimbra, and that a detachment of his army occupied Oporto, and these 'news' were to be sent on to Soult (*Correspondance*, 17,531). On that day Masséna was already behind the Coa on his retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo.

[1] Compare the dispatches of March 30, where it is demonstrated that Soult has nothing to fear for Badajoz, because Wellington cannot detach more than 15,000 men against it, and that of December 12, where it is demonstrated that Soult having 80,000 men should be ashamed of himself for allowing the 'affront' of Arroyo dos Molinos to be put upon him by Hill and 6,000 British.

[2] 'Il ne faut pas se diviser: il faut réunir ses forces, présenter des masses imposantes: toutes les troupes qu'on laisse en arrière courent le risque d'être battues en détail, ou forcées d'abandonner les postes,' &c. Napoleon to Soult, *Correspondance*, December 6, 1811.

practical inconveniences of such evacuations, were loth to carry them out. To disgarrison a region meant that all communications were cut off, and that the nearest posts were at once blockaded by guerrillero bands. Whenever the Army of Andalusia concentrated, it ceased to receive its dispatches or its convoys from Madrid, and soon learned that Granada and Seville were being menaced. Whenever the Army of the North concentrated, the road between Vittoria and Burgos was cut, and the *partidas* descended from the Cantabrian mountains to threaten all the posts in Old Castile. And the concentration, when made, could only continue for a few days for lack of food, for there is hardly a region in Spain where a very large army, 80,000 or 100,000 men, can live on the country for a week. It was this, and no mere jealousy of rival generals, which forced Soult and Marmont to part, as we shall see, in June 1811, and Marmont and Dorsenne in September of the same year, and which in November 1812 prevented the immense body formed by the united Armies of the South, Centre, North, and Portugal, from pursuing Wellington to Ciudad Rodrigo. If such a force as 80,000 men were concentrated, it had to be fed; after a few days of living on the country it would be forced to ask for convoys. But convoys coming from long distances were the destined prey of the guerrilleros; if not captured they were at least delayed *ad infinitum*. Meanwhile the army in front would run out of provisions, and be forced to scatter itself once more in order to live. After Masséna's venture no French marshal ever dared to think of plunging into Portugal, where he knew that he would find before him a country systematically devastated. No one was better aware of this limitation of the French power than Wellington. He had written as early as 1809 that the enemy could not turn him out of the Peninsula with anything less than 100,000 men, and that he could make such arrangements that an army of that number could not live in the country. The prophecy was fulfilled over and over again. With the enormous strength of the imperial armies it was not impossible to collect 80,000 or 100,000 men—but it was impossible to feed them. All concentrations must be but temporary. When the enemy was massed, the Anglo-Portuguese army might have to give ground, or only to accept an action under the most favourable conditions. But the

French would soon have to scatter, and then Wellington regained his freedom of action.

It was useless, therefore, for the Emperor to reiterate his orders that his marshals were to join their armies and 'livrer enfin une belle bataille' against Wellington[1]. It takes two sides to fight a battle, and Wellington was determined never to accept a general action, when the numbers were hopelessly against him. He would give back into Portugal, and the enemy could not follow him for more than a march or two.

Meanwhile, though he could not undertake to descend himself into Portugal, Napoleon did not cease to pour troops across the Pyrenees. It is often said that after Masséna's expedition of 1810 he began to neglect the Peninsula, and to turn all his thoughts towards the growing tension with Russia. This is not correct; it ignores the fact that the French armies in Spain rose to their highest numbers during the year 1811. While not ceasing to send their regular drafts to all the corps there engaged, the Emperor dispatched three new divisions of his best troops to the front during the summer. These were no collections of newly-raised fourth battalions or *régiments de marche*, but old units of high reputation, drawn partly from the Army of Italy, partly from the garrisons of the coasts of France. One division, under General Souham, ultimately went to join the Army of Portugal, the second, under General Caffarelli, was absorbed in the Army of the North, the third, under General Reille, was sent to reinforce the garrison of Navarre and Aragon, where Suchet wanted fresh troops to occupy the land behind him, when he was pushing forward towards Catalonia and Valencia. In addition, two fresh regiments of Italian troops were requisitioned from the Viceroy Eugène Beauharnais for service in eastern Spain[2]. The total reinforcement to the armies beyond

[1] Napoleon to Berthier; orders for Bessières and Marmont of May 26, 1811.

[2] See *Correspondance*, 17,784, Napoleon to Clarke, 8th June, 1811. The divisions were composed as follows:—

Souham. 1st Line (4 batts.) and 62nd Line (4 batts.), from Turin and Marseilles; 23rd Léger (2 batts.), from Auxonne; 101st Line (4 batts.), from Turin and Spezzia. About 7,000 men.

Caffarelli. 5th Léger (2 batts.), from Cherbourg; 3rd and 105th Line

the Pyrenees amounted to some 25,000 men, in addition to the regular annual draft of conscripts. The deficit in the strength of the French forces caused by Masséna's losses in Portugal was more than made up, and the gross total in October 1811 amounted to no less than 368,000 men. Nothing was withdrawn from the Peninsula till the following winter.

(each 2 batts.), from Rennes; 10th Léger (4 batts.), from Rennes; 52nd Line (2 batts.), from Toulon. About 6,000 men.

Reille. 81st Line (2 batts. at Pampeluna, 1 from Genoa); 10th Line and 20th Line (4 batts. each), already at Pampeluna; 60th Line (4 batts.), from Toulon. About 7,500 men.

Italian Division. 1st Line (4 batts.); 7th Line (4 batts.). About 4,000 men.

SECTION XXV: CHAPTER II

SUCHET ON THE EBRO. THE FALL OF TORTOSA

In the last pages of the third volume of this work we brought the history of the campaigns of Suchet and Macdonald in Aragon and Catalonia as far as December 12th, 1810, the day on which the Marshal came down to the lower Ebro at the head of the field-divisions of the 7th Corps, in order to cover the long-delayed siege of Tortosa, which his colleague, the commander of the Army of Aragon, was about to take in hand.

For five months, ever since August 1810, as it will be remembered, Suchet had been waiting to commence the attack on Tortosa, which he was not strong enough to conduct with his own resources, since the besieger would have not only to execute his own operations, but to fend off at the same time all attempts by the Spanish armies of Catalonia and Valencia to relieve a fortress which was equally important to each of them. For Tortosa commanded the one land route by which Catalonia and Valencia were still able to communicate with each other; no other bridge on the Ebro was in Spanish hands. It was highly desirable to keep the line of defence in eastern Spain unbroken, and Tortosa lay at its narrowest and most dangerous point. The Emperor Napoleon attached an immense importance to its capture, and considered that after its fall, and that of Tarragona, the conquest of Valencia and the termination of the war on this side of the Peninsula would be at hand. Already in September 1810 he was looking forward to all these events as matters of the near future[1]. But though Tortosa was actually to be captured in January 1811, Tarragona in June, and Valencia in December, the long-foreseen consummation was never to come to pass. For two years more, down to the very end of

[1] *Correspondance*, no. 16,910, of September 10, 1810.

the war, the indomitable Catalans were destined to maintain their independence, despite of all the successes of the French arms.

Tortosa was not quite so indispensable in reality as it looked on the map. For though it would have been a point of absolutely vital importance to the Spaniards, if they had been compelled to conduct all their operations by land, it must not be forgotten that the British command of the Mediterranean gave an alternative route for communication between north and south, which the French could never touch. Long after Tortosa had fallen, troops were repeatedly and easily transferred from Catalonia to Valencia, and vice versa, despite of the fact that Suchet had completely mastered all the land routes. Indeed it may be said that the sea passage from one to the other was always preferable to the route through Tortosa, for the country about both banks of the lower Ebro was rugged, barren, and thinly peopled, and Tortosa itself—a decayed city of 10,000 inhabitants—was the only place in this region which presented resources of any kind for an army on the march. It is, moreover, twenty miles from the sea, and not a port; strange to say, there is no decent harbour at the mouth of the Ebro. Though the river is intermittently navigable for a good many miles in its lower course, its estuary has never been a point through which trade discharges itself to the sea. The commerce of southern Catalonia goes to Tarragona, sixty miles to the north of the Ebro mouth, that of Northern Valencia to Peniscola, thirty miles to its south. Tortosa, indeed, was more important to the French than to the Spaniards, since Napoleon's armies were tied down to land routes, and, if ever they were to make a lodgement in Valencia, would find the possession of that city and its bridge absolutely necessary, if they were to keep in touch with the troops left in Catalonia.

At last, in December 1810, Macdonald had accomplished the preliminary duties which rendered it possible for him to move on Tortosa. He had revictualled Barcelona, so that it would be safe for some months from famine, and he had repaired the gap in the French lines in northern Catalonia, which had been caused by Henry O'Donnell's daring expedition to La Bispal in the preceding September. Though the Spanish army had not been

crushed, nor indeed seriously injured, it had been thrust aside for the moment: Macdonald had brought down three divisions, over 15,000 men, to Mora on the Ebro, some twenty-five miles to the north of Tortosa, and with them he was prepared to act as a covering force to the projected siege. He was strong enough to render any attempt at relief by the Catalan army impossible, for a force sufficient to beat him could not be collected by the enemy, unless they abandoned all their outlying posts; and this was practically impossible, for local feeling in the Principality was too strong to allow of the withdrawal of the smaller Spanish detachments from the various valleys and small towns which they covered. There was still the Valencian army to be considered; but Suchet considered that he could himself deal with that unfortunate and oft-defeated force; he had already proved its weakness at the series of engagements in August[1] in which he had so effectually scattered the levies of the dictator José Caro. One division would probably suffice to keep the Valencians at bay, while with two others the actual siege of Tortosa could be taken in hand. It was the Catalan army alone which had made Suchet anxious, and he was now to be relieved of all care on that side by Macdonald.

The preparations for the siege, it will be remembered, had long been in progress; ever since August magazines and material had been accumulating at Xerta. They had been brought down the Ebro from Mequinenza, whenever the water was high enough to allow of navigation—not without much difficulty, and occasional petty disasters when the Catalan miqueletes made a pounce upon an exposed convoy[2]. Fifty-two heavy guns were now lying ready at Xerta, with 30,000 rounds of ammunition for them, and 90,000 lb. more of powder. To set in motion the besieging army and this very large battering-train, it only required that the covering forces on each side of the Ebro should take up their positions. When Macdonald had brought up his troops to Mora, and undertaken to move them to Perello, the junction point of the two roads from Tortosa to Tarragona, nothing more remained to be settled. If the Catalan army should try to attack him it would certainly be beaten, being far too weak

[1] See vol. iii. p. 494.

[2] See vol. iii. p. 503.

to face 15,000 French troops concentrated in one body. For the restraining of the Valencians, on the other side of the Ebro, General Musnier with 7,000 men was placed at Uldecona, twelve miles beyond Tortosa on the great road to the south.

These arrangements being made, Suchet crossed the Ebro at Xerta by his pontoon bridge on December 15th with twelve battalions, and made a sweeping circular march to shut in Tortosa on the northern side, while five battalions more, under General Abbé, moved by the other bank to block the bridge-head, by which the city communicates with Valencia and the south. The operation was completed without resistance, save at the Col de Alba, where a post of 600 Catalans, placed to cover the road between Tortosa and the pass of Balaguer, was discovered. This small force was driven into Tortosa after a skirmish; two small convoys on their way from Tarragona by sea had to turn back, because the way into the city was closed.

The siege of Tortosa was remarkable for its swift progress and complete success—it can only be compared with Wellington's capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, just a year later, in this respect. The Army of Aragon arrived in front of the city on December 16th—the surrender took place on January 2nd. At first sight the problem set before Suchet appeared by no means likely to receive such a rapid solution, for Tortosa as a fortress had many strong points. The city lies on and around the end of a spur of the Sierra de Alba, which runs down to the bank of the Ebro. This spur at its termination is many-headed: three ravines divide it into four separate hills, of which the highest is that crowned by the castle. The other three die down into undulations, and leave between them and the Ebro a comparatively flat space, on which the lower part of the town is built. Its higher quarters lie on the slopes where the various hills begin to rise from the level. The old enceinte of Tortosa had consisted of a mediaeval wall running across the hills and down the ravines between them, so as to enclose nothing but the inhabited parts of the city. But after a famous siege during the War of the Spanish Succession (1708), a number of outer works had been constructed to crown the culminating summit of each hill, and keep future besiegers at a distance, while part of the inner ancient fortifications had been transformed into a series of bastions, so far as the ground allowed.

The outer works were: (1) Starting from the river, on the extreme north-east front, a large hornwork called Las Tenazas [1], crowning the hill which lies most to the left, protecting the suburb of Remolinos, and commanding the flat ground as far as the river, from which it is only 400 yards distant. (2) A second hornwork covered the outer side of the castle hill: this was called El Bonete; there was a deep ravine on each side of it. (3) A sort of outer enceinte with three bastions (La Victoria, El Cristo, and Cruces) runs along the summit of the fourth hill, which is broader than the rest and expands into a plateau; the old town wall formed a second line in rear of this advanced front. (4) The last hill, that most towards the south-east, was crowned by a strong closed fort, named after the Duke of Orleans, the general who had captured the city for Philip V in the year 1708. Between the Orleans hill and the river there was no high ground; this was the only open front of the city which was approachable on a level without any natural hindrances. Here the enceinte had no outer works; it consisted of two large bastions, San Pedro and San Juan, with a demi-lune named El Temple projecting between them. This last was a low work of no great strength: the curtain behind it, which joined San Pedro and San Juan, was a mere shell with no terrace or room for guns. The other (south-western) side of the city was sufficiently protected by the broad and swift river, 300 yards in width; behind it was only the ancient wall, but, as this was wholly inaccessible, its weakness did not matter. In the middle of the river front, which was 1,200 yards long, was a gate leading to the great bridge of boats. This was protected on the further bank by a little *tête-du-pont*, built in the form of a ravelin and well armed with artillery.

The garrison consisted, when the siege began, of 7,179 men, including 600 artillery and a weak battalion of Urban Guards. The regiments were drawn partly from the Catalonian and partly from the Valencian army, there being seven battalions from the former and four from the latter [2]. The governor was

[1] Napier's 'Tenaxas' and Belmas's 'Tenailles' = 'the Pinchers.'

[2] The strength of the garrison raises a conflict of authorities. The Spanish official figures are those given above, which are followed by Schepeler and Arteche. But Suchet says that he captured 9,461 prisoners, including the wounded in the hospitals, and that several hundred men

Major-General Lilli, Conde de Alacha, an old officer who had won some credit, two years back, by bringing off his small corps intact after the battle of Tudela, when he had been cut off by the French in the mountains[1]. Unfortunately it is impossible to argue that because an officer has made a skilful retreat he is a good fighting-man. Lilli, indeed, proved the reverse on this occasion—all that can be said in his defence is that he was old and in bad health. His conduct during the siege was vacillating and inexplicable; he more than once declared that he would give over charge of the defence to the second in command, Brigadier-General Yriarte. But he would then appear again, and countermand all Yriarte's orders. In the end he capitulated on his own account, against the wishes and without the knowledge of the brigadier.

The problem in poliorcetics set before Suchet and his engineers at Tortosa had some resemblance to that which was to confront Wellington at Badajoz a few months later. Given a town to besiege which is partly built on heights crowned by forts and partly in the flat, is it better to attack one of the forts, which if taken commands the whole town, or to start against the lower front? The latter will be easier to assail, but after its fall the strongholds on the heights may hold out as independent fortresses. Whereas if a dominating work on a high-lying hill is taken in hand, it may make a very hard and long resistance, but, if once it is captured, the whole city is overlooked by it and must surrender. The answer to the problem seems to be that all depends on the governor and the garrison; if he and they are weak, it will suffice to attack the easier front, for when the lower town has fallen the morale will be so shaken that they will surrender, without attempting to hold the upper works. But if they are active and obstinate, it may be worth while to aim

more had perished before the surrender. He gives a muster roll of the garrison purporting to bear out his figures (*Mémoires*, i. p. 359), which Belmas copies. Since Suchet's Spanish totals are often more than doubtful (cf. vol. iii. p. 304) I accept the figures given by his adversaries. The December figures of the Spanish Army of Catalonia show 13,040 men in all distributed in garrisons, including those of Tarragona, Tortosa, Seu de Urgel, Cardona, and smaller places. I think that 7,000 for Tortosa is probable.

[1] See vol. ii. p. 6.

at the most commanding position, which, if captured, absolutely compels the capitulation of the whole place. Yet there remains the danger that the crucial fort may be so strong that no effort can take it from a determined defender. This happened to Wellington at the two earlier sieges of Badajoz; the fall of San Cristobal would have brought about most inevitably the surrender of the city. But it proved too hard a nut to crack, in the time and with the means at the English general's disposal. Suchet at Tortosa struck at the easiest front, taking the risk that he might have to conduct a second siege of the upper works (as he had to do at Tarragona, his next leaguer). When he had breached the weakest point, but before a storm had been tried, the imbecile governor capitulated.

The weak front of Tortosa was the bastion of San Pedro and the demi-lune of El Temple on its flank. They were not properly supported or flanked by any works on higher ground, for Fort Orleans (on the nearest hill) did not command all the flats in front of San Pedro, and moreover Suchet intended to give this fort so much business on its own account that its gunners would have little attention to spare for the attack on the lower ground to their right. There were two additional advantages: the soil in front of San Pedro was soft river mould, very easy to dig; and moreover this bastion could be enfiladed by batteries on the other side of the Ebro. Such batteries had nothing to fear, if properly constructed, from the guns of the little *tête-du-pont*; while on the river front of the city there were no cannon at all —they could not be mounted on the mediaeval walls.

On the 16th, 17th, and 18th Suchet was employed in bringing up his siege-guns, choosing the emplacements of his camps, and constructing flying-bridges across the river, both above and below the fortress. On the 19th active operations started, with the development of a false attack on Fort Orleans, whose attention it was necessary to distract. The construction of a first parallel against this work was begun with some ostentation, and had to be carried out under a furious fire from its artillery. On the night of the 20th–21st the real business commenced: 2,300 men crept across the flat ground by the river opposite San Pedro, and threw up an entrenchment within 160 yards of its ditch. They were undiscovered and unopposed, for the night

was dark and windy, and the Spaniards had no outposts beyond the walls, and kept bad watch. At dawn 500 paces of trench had been constructed, and a safe access to the parallel had been contrived, by connecting one of its ends with a ravine which cuts across the flat a little to the rear, and whose bottom could not be searched by the guns of the place. The trench was sloped away on the right, so as not to be enfiladed by downward fire from Fort Orleans, which would have commanded it supposing it had been drawn exactly parallel to the front of San Pedro. This was a tremendously advantageous start; seldom has a besieger been able to begin his works at such a short distance from his objective.

Next morning the new trench became visible to the Spaniards, who turned all the artillery of the neighbouring front upon it, but to little effect, for the soil was soft and the French had dug deep. A sortie was made from the demi-lune of El Temple, but was driven off with loss. The only successful effort of the Spaniards on this day was that the guns of Fort Orleans succeeded in destroying part of the trenches of the false attack in front of them, and drove out the workers. This was of little consequence, as Suchet was not really aiming at the fort. On the 22nd and 23rd December the main attack was urged with a celerity that seemed appalling to the defenders; despite of a heavy fire of musketry as well as of artillery, approaches were pushed forward from the first parallel, to within 80 yards of the bastion of San Pedro and 110 yards of the Temple demi-lune. The works opposite Fort Orleans were repaired and extended. On the 24th the two approaches in the plain were connected by a long trench, which formed the second parallel, only 60 yards from the walls. On the 25th new zigzags, thrown out from this line, reached the glacis of San Pedro. The garrison made two sorties in the night to hinder this advance at all hazards, but failed, being driven off by the musketry from the second parallel without much difficulty: the force employed, 300 men, was too small. Meanwhile the artillery and sappers were constructing ten batteries, four—and these the largest—in the main frontal attack, but four others on the heights over against Fort Orleans, and two beyond the river, whose special purpose was to enfilade the front of San Pedro,

and also to play upon the bridge of boats which joined the city to the *tête-du-pont*. The trenches on the heights before Fort Orleans were also strengthened, and a second parallel constructed in front of the first, at some loss of life; but it was necessary to keep the enemy on this front employed, or he would have interfered too much with the real attack in the plain.

All this had been accomplished before the French had fired a single gun; there is hardly another instance to be quoted of a siege in which the assailants got up to the glacis, and crowned the covered way, without any assistance from their artillery. It seems that the gunnery of the defence must have been exceptionally bad, and the sorties hitherto had been small and feeble —quite insufficient to interfere with, much less to destroy, the approaches. Noting batteries sketched out on several points and approaching completion, Yriarte saw that he must at all costs try to delay the opening of the adversary's fire, and on the night of the 27th–28th made two sallies in considerable force—600 men came out of the Rastro gate, beyond Fort Orleans, to attack the upper trenches, as many more issued from San Pedro against the main attack. The first-named sortie was an entire failure—most of the men lay down and began to skirmish with the trench-guard before they had got near the works; a very few reached them, and were killed on the parapet. But the attack in the plain was a serious one, and pressed home. The lodgement in the covered way was captured and destroyed, and the Spaniards penetrated to the second parallel, and captured part of it for a time. They were finally driven out by a reserve of four battalions commanded by General Abbé, but not before they had done considerable damage. The besiegers had to spend the following day and night (28–29 December) in repairing the trenches and parapets, and getting a fresh lodgement in the covered way. On the morning of the latter day the ten siege-batteries opened simultaneously with 45 guns, and very soon gained a marked superiority over the fire of the defence. The cannon of Fort Orleans and the bastion of San Juan were silenced, as were also those of the Temple demi-lune and San Pedro. The bridge of boats was nearly destroyed. Next night, the Spanish fire being crushed, the third parallel was

constructed on the very brink of the ditch of San Pedro, and within 25 yards of the wall of the bastion. The mortar batteries were employed in distributing a rain of projectiles in the streets behind the attacked front, to prevent the besieged from constructing defences and barricades on which they might fall back when the wall was breached. Though not altogether successful —for the Spaniards succeeded in building some traverses and in blocking and loopholing many houses—the bombardment caused many casualties, and cowed the population, who evacuated this quarter and sought refuge in the interior of the town. The interior of Fort Orleans was also shelled with some effect: its garrison retired to their bomb-proofs, and kept very quiet, making little attempt to repair the injuries to its outer wall, or to replace the injured cannon.

On the night of the 30th the French succeeded in getting down from the third parallel into the ditch of San Pedro, with the object of mining the scarp and blowing down sufficient débris to fill the ditch. Their first party was driven out again by the fire of two guns which had been brought up to enfilade the ditch from the extreme flank of the bastion. But on the following morning all the siege-batteries were turned on to these guns, and destroyed them. Meanwhile the Spaniards had abandoned the *tête-du-pont*, taking the men away by boat, and throwing the guns into the water, except three injured and spiked pieces. The ditch was occupied during the day (December 31st) and the miners got to work, so little incommoded by the fire of the defenders, who were hardly visible on the wall, that they lost only two men killed while establishing themselves in their dangerous position. Their most serious hindrance came from the good quality of the masonry which they were attacking—it was mediaeval work and as hard as iron. The decisive stroke at this point, however, was to be given by the artillery, and on the night of the 31st a battery for four 24-pounders was commenced in the third parallel—only 25 yards away from the ramparts of San Pedro. It had not yet opened when, at ten o'clock on the morning of January 1st, 1811, the governor hoisted the white flag, and sent a Colonel Veyan into Suchet's camp, to treat for surrender. The proposals, however, were quite inadmissible, as Alacha only covenanted to evacuate

Tortosa if it were not relieved in fifteen days, and demanded that the garrison should not be prisoners of war, but should be allowed to march to Tarragona with arms and baggage. Suchet refused to treat (as was natural) but was delighted with the aspect of affairs—a garrison which begins to parley before there is a practicable breach in its walls is obviously demoralized, and needs only a little further persuasion by the strong arm. He sent back with the Spanish *parlementaire* his own chief of the staff, Colonel Saint Cyr-Nugues, with orders to impress on the governor the futility of further demands such as those he had just made. He announced that he should storm the place next morning unless one of the upper forts were placed in his hands as a pledge of complete submission. The governor therefore called and consulted a council of war: some of the officers and notables assembled voted that an attempt must be made to defend the breach, others that the garrison should retire into the castle and forts, and abandon the town as untenable. But there were some despairing voices raised: the representatives of the municipality spoke with terror of the bombardment of the last few days; some of the officers complained that their troops were completely demoralized, and were leaving their posts to hide in the town. Suchet's proposals, nevertheless, were rejected.

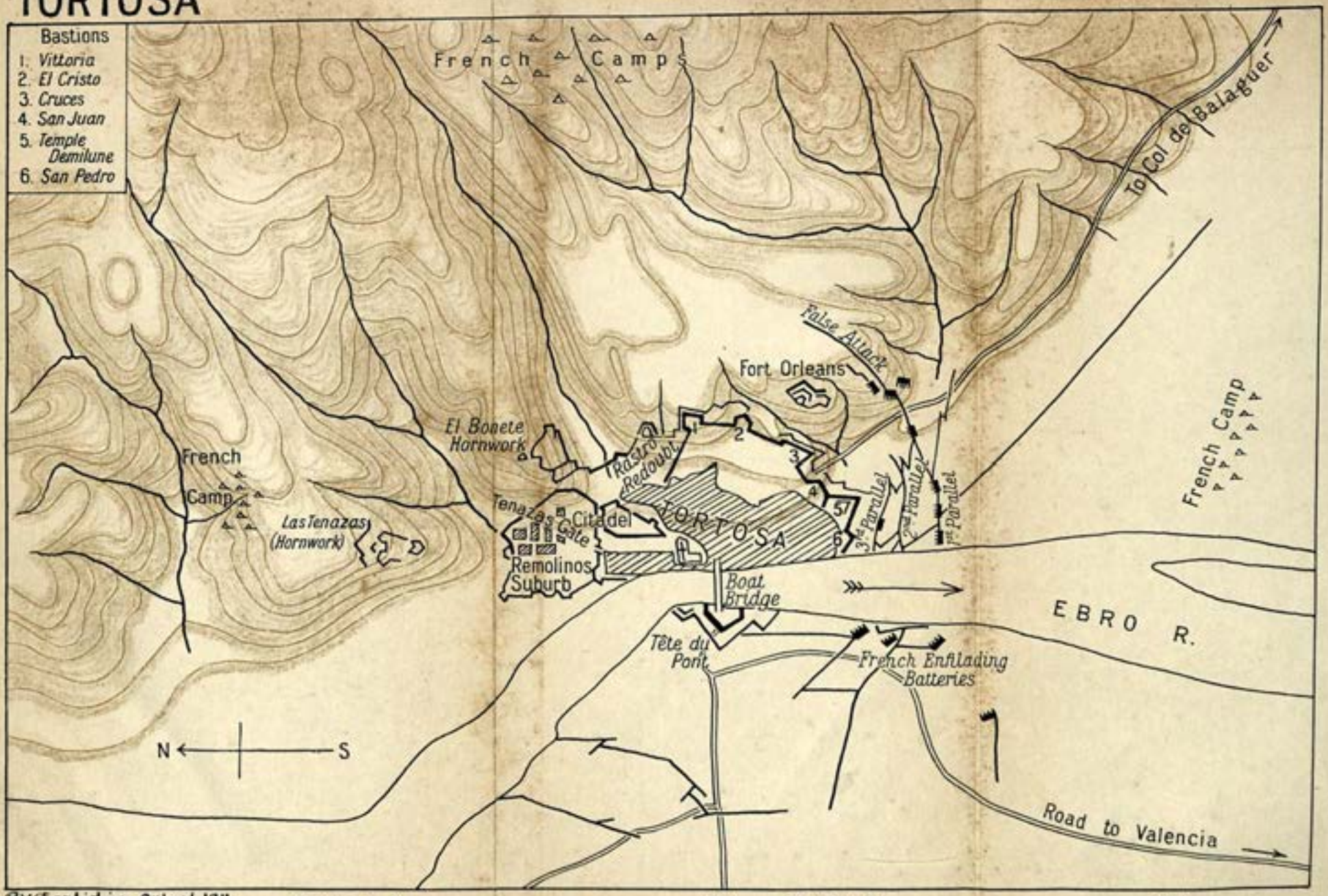
Only a little more persuasion, however, was required to break down Alacha's nerve. On the morning of the 2nd of January the 4-gun battery opposite San Pedro opened with the best effect; by the afternoon there was a breach 15 yards broad, and the miners reported that they had got deep enough into the lower walls to make an explosion profitable. The curtain at the back of the Temple demi-lune had also been much battered, and was crumbling—but an assault here was not practicable, as the intervening work was still in the hands of the Spaniards. For a second time the governor hoisted the white flag, but Suchet ordered the fire to continue at the breach, and began to collect his storming columns in the shelter of the parallels, while his mortar batteries played on the town at large. He was afraid that the enemy was scheming for a suspension of arms, during which they would clandestinely repair and retrench the broken wall. The answer that he sent back, when a second *parlementaire* came out to him, was that he must have a simple

and complete capitulation, and that one of the upper forts must be placed in his hands before he would allow the bombardment to cease.

Alacha continued to keep the white flag flying on the citadel and to exchange messages with Suchet, while the fire was still going on at the breach of San Pedro, where Yriarte was doing his best to keep his men together, though he had his doubts as to the result of the threatened assault. Meanwhile the French general took an extraordinary resolution: gathering from the confused and wavering replies of the governor that the old man was at his wit's end, and ready to yield to pressure, he came to the castle gate himself, with his staff and a company of grenadiers, and sent for the officer on guard—who did not order his men to fire because the white flag was flying, and messengers continually passing to and fro. Suchet told the astonished subaltern that hostilities were at an end, and that he must see the governor without delay. When Alacha came down to him, he assumed a peremptory tone, said that further resistance was criminal, that the assault was about to take place at once, and that the garrison would be put to the sword if resistance continued. He bade the governor ratify on the spot the terms of capitulation which had been sent in upon the previous afternoon. Utterly cowed, the old man obeyed at once, called for a pen, and signed the document upon the carriage of a gun. The company of grenadiers which had accompanied Suchet occupied the castle, and orders were sent down to the city to cease all resistance. The first notice that Yriarte got of what had happened was by hearing French drums beating in the streets behind him, as a column descended from the citadel to force the defenders of the breach to lay down their arms[1]. When they had withdrawn, the storming column ran into the gap, and sacked the quarter adjoining, despite of the cries and

[1] This narrative of the fall of Tortosa is mainly derived from the sources given by Arteche, especially Yriarte's narrative, and from Schepeler and Vacani. These in some details differ from Suchet's story repeated by Belmas, though there is no fundamental discrepancy. But it is clear that Alacha was even more to blame than the French versions would give us to understand.

TORTOSA



BY Barbishire, Oxford, 1911.

remonstrances of their officers. They would not be cheated out of what they considered their lawful prey[1].

In this disgraceful way fell Tortosa, after only eighteen days of siege, twelve of open trenches, and four of bombardment. The French lost no more than 400 men, nearly half of them among the sappers and artillerymen[2], for the infantry only suffered in repelling the sorties. The Spaniards had about 1,400 killed and wounded, but as the garrison marched out only 3,974 strong and had started with 7,179, it is clear that there had been other wastage. During the last days of the siege the Urban Guard disappeared, and the commanders of the regular troops were complaining bitterly of desertion among their men. Indeed, from the governor downwards, there seems to have been too much demoralization in all ranks. The second in command, Yriarte, and many other officers did their duty, but the defence was not what might have been expected from Catalans, with the example of Gerona before their eyes. From the start Suchet had the mastery, and largely owing to the mismanagement of his adversaries; if (for example) they had kept proper watch, he would never have been able to start his first parallel at the distance of only 160 yards from the walls—this piece of luck saved him many days of work. But if the defence was unskilful, and anything rather than resolute, the main responsibility falls on the governor, whose conduct was calculated to discourage even the most zealous subordinates. For he sometimes pleaded his age and infirmity, and declared that he handed over all responsibility to the second in command, shutting himself up in the castle for whole days at a time; but on other occasions he interfered in details, countermanded orders, and practically resumed charge of the defence. But to call a council of war, to receive its opinion in favour of protracted defence, and then to capitulate behind its back was worst of all. Such con-

[1] Vacani, iv. 420–1.

[2] The figures of 400 killed and wounded given by Belmas seem very low, but are borne out by the invaluable lists in Martinien, who shows that only some thirty officers were killed or wounded at Tortosa, of whom twelve belonged to the engineers, artillery, and sappers. Thirty officers hit imply (at the usual rate of one to twenty men) 600 casualties, but it is very possible that there were no more than 400 and odd, for the engineer officers, of whom six were killed or hurt, ran special risks.

duct was absolutely ignominious, and it was not without reason that the Catalan Junta ordered him to be tried (in his absence) for cowardice and treason. He was condemned to death, and the sentence (grotesquely enough) carried out upon his effigy, while he was safe in France, a prisoner on parole.

That nothing was done from outside to save Tortosa was mainly due to the rapidity of Suchet's operations. The Junta of Catalonia was busily engaged in concerting measures for concentrating a relieving army, had sent to Cadiz for arms and (if possible) reinforcements, and had opened negotiations with the Valencians and with the irregular forces of Carbajal and Villa Campa in the Aragonese mountains. But who could calculate that the defence would last only eighteen days? Before any general scheme had been worked out the place had fallen[1]. The only organized force in the neighbourhood was the section of the Catalan army which lay in and about Tarragona. The responsibility here lay no longer with the active Henry O'Donnell, who had thrown up the command in December, and sailed to the Balearic Islands to give his gangrened wounds time to heal. General Yranzo, as the senior officer in the principality, ought to have taken over the charge of operations; but he called a council of war at Tarragona, and declared himself unwilling to assume the position that had fallen to him. He was unpopular, and the Catalans were holding violent meetings in favour of the Marquis of Campoverde, who enjoyed much local popularity at the moment. This ambitious officer finally obtained the interim command, owing to the abnegation of his seniors; but Tortosa had fallen before he was seated in the saddle, for he was finally recognized as chief only upon January 6th, four days after the capitulation.

But even a capable officer, enjoying undisputed control over all the Catalan forces, could have done little during the few days that the siege of Tortosa lasted. The covering army under Macdonald was too strong to be meddled with by the two divisions based on Tarragona. On the first day of the siege (as we have already seen) he marched from Mora with his 15,000 men: on the 18th he came up to Perello, where meet the two

[1] For all this see Wimpffen's reports printed in the Appendix to Suchet's *Mémoires*, i. 359.

roads from Tortosa to the north, thus absolutely barring any attempt to approach the place. After some days he found it impossible to feed his troops in this rugged spot, and divided them, placing one division of 6,000 men under Frère on the Tarragona–Amposta road, in the direct rear of the besieging army, while with the other two he retired to Ginestar on the Ebro, twenty miles due north of Tortosa, from whence he could reinforce Suchet in a single march if the Spaniards made any movement. But no one came against him: the existence of his army in this quarter sufficed to paralyse the modest force then lying in the neighbourhood of Tarragona. Campoverde took one division to the Fort of Balaguer, covering the coast road, from which he observed Frère at a distance; while Yranzo with the other occupied Macdonald's old head quarters at Momblanch. But they knew that they were too weak to risk an advance from these points, and while they remained quiet Tortosa fell. The only diversions carried out during the siege were in corners of Catalonia, where even a considerable success would have had no effect on the course of affairs on the lower Ebro. A French foraging party of 650 cavalry was cut up at Tarrega, near Lerida, on January 1, by a detachment from Momblanch. On December 25, a landing party from the British frigates on the Catalan station surprised the post of Palamos, and destroyed there two gunboats and eight transports which were coasting down from Cette towards Barcelona. But remaining on shore too long they were surprised by a French flying column, and driven back to their boats with a loss of over 200 men, including Captain Fane of the *Cambrian*, the officer in command.

On the news of the fall of Tortosa the Spanish divisions drew back towards Tarragona. Suchet left General Habert in charge of the captured city, dispersed Musnier's troops to Morella, Alcañiz and Mequinenza, and left the Neapolitan brigade lent him by Macdonald at Mora. Harispe's division escorted the Spanish prisoners to Saragossa, and was accompanied by Suchet himself, who had much to settle in Aragon before he took in hand the siege of Tarragona, the next task imposed upon him by the Emperor, who had informed him that 'he would find his Marshal's bâton within its walls'. Before leaving the neighbourhood of Tortosa Suchet ordered four

battalions of Habert's division to execute a *coup de main* upon the little fort of San Felipé de Balaguer, on the coast defile of the Col de Balaguer so often mentioned of late. It was completely successful—after a short bombardment, part of the garrison escaped along the Tarragona road; the governor with ninety men surrendered [January 8, 1811]. The fort was a trifling work, but its strategic position was eminently important, as it blocks the only road along the sea from Tarragona to the regions of the Ebro mouth.

Macdonald, being no longer needed in the direction of Tortosa, resolved to return to Lerida, at the same time that Suchet went off to Saragossa. They were to meet again in the spring for the great enterprise against Tarragona. For reasons not easy to fathom, the Marshal made his march to his base not by the direct road, but past Tarragona via Reus and Valls. Probably he was desirous of clearing the country-side of the outlying Spanish troops as a preliminary to the siege, and perhaps he had some idea of destroying any magazines that might lie in this direction. That he could have no serious intention of blockading Tarragona was shown by the fact that he had sent back all his cavalry, save one regiment, and most of his guns, to Lerida. Since he had also lent his Neapolitan brigade to Suchet, his column was not much over 12,000 strong.

Macdonald was usually unlucky in his Catalonian campaigning; though he had won great reputation in mountain warfare against the Austrians in his early days, he does not seem to have been able to apply his knowledge of it to Spain. Marching from Ginestar by Falset, he reached and occupied the large town of Reus, only ten miles from Tarragona, on January 12th. From thence he set his army in motion for Valls on the 15th, marching across the front of the fortress, with which he clearly had no intention of interfering. His vanguard was formed by the Italian division, which was followed at a distance of three miles by his three French brigades and his single regiment of cavalry. Meanwhile Campoverde, now in command at Tarragona, had detached General Sarsfield with a division of 3,000 foot and 800 horse—all that the Army of Catalonia possessed—to observe the march of the French, while he himself remained just outside Tarragona with the remainder of his troops—some 8,000 men.

Sarsfield had taken post at Pla, some five miles north of Valls, which town he had evacuated on the approach of the enemy. When Macdonald's leading brigade reached Valls, information was received that there was a Spanish force close in its front. Without waiting for orders from the Marshal, who had merely directed that Valls should be occupied, the commander of the vanguard, General Eugenio [1], resolved to bring the enemy to action. Marching with five Italian battalions and only thirty chasseurs—about 2,500 men in all—he ran headlong into Sarsfield's forces drawn up in a well-masked position, the infantry occupying a ridge, the 800 cavalry hidden in a wood to the left. Unable to estimate the enemy's strength, and thinking that a brisk attack might drive them off the ground, Eugenio—a man of reckless courage—made a direct frontal charge against the enemy's position in column of battalions. He was completely beaten, his brigade fell back still fighting, and he was himself mortally wounded. The recoiling mass was saved from annihilation by the arrival on the field of the other Italian brigade, that of Palombini, on which it rallied. But Sarsfield's troops were determined to finish appropriately the day that they had begun so well. They fell on the newly formed line and broke it, the cavalry turning Palombini's right and sweeping it away. The whole Italian division would have been annihilated but for the arrival of two squadrons of the 24th Dragoons under Colonel Delort, who charged the victorious cavalry, and, though hopelessly outnumbered, gave the Spaniards so much trouble that the routed infantry of Eugenio and Palombini escaped into Valls, without much further loss. Macdonald had refrained from bringing up the French brigades to help his vanguard, because he had discovered a column under Campoverde coming out of Tarragona to threaten his rear. This demonstration kept him occupied while the Italians were being cut up by Sarsfield, whose operations were extremely well managed and resolute. The Italian division and the dragoons lost 600 men including a few prisoners [2]—the Spaniards only 160.

[1] His name was really Orsatelli, but he always appears in the reports as Eugenio.

[2] Vacani says only 266 (v. 26), including 3 officers killed and 13 wounded, but Martinien's lists show 3 officers killed and 24 wounded;

Next day (January 16th) Macdonald was in order of battle at Valls, with two fronts, one facing towards Sarsfield and the north, the other towards Campoverde and Tarragona. But the Spaniards wisely refused to commit themselves to a general engagement, and Macdonald would not divide his army by marching to assail one or the other of the two hostile columns. In the night he retreated to Momblanch by a forced march, leaving the enemy encouraged by the results of the combat of the 15th, and no less by the fact that the Marshal had not tried to avenge his check by an attack on the following day. The French retired to Lerida unmolested, and the Duke of Tarentum began to make preparations for his approaching return to Tarragona in company with Suchet's corps, as had been ordered by the Emperor. It is difficult to see that Macdonald gained anything by his curious flank march, and he certainly lost heavily in prestige. Campoverde, exultant at the good fortune of his first venture in arms, recovered from the despondency caused by the fall of Tortosa, and dreamed of making a great blow against the French by no less an achievement than the recapture of Barcelona.

Ever since the commencement of the war plots and conspiracies had been rife in that great city—it will be remembered that Duhesme had been forced to punish the most important of them by a series of executions[1]. Discontent was as keen as ever, and a knot of patriots had formed a scheme for opening to their friends without the gates of the fortress of Monjuich, which dominates the whole place. This was to be done by the assistance of a repentant 'Juramentado,' a Spanish commissary in the French service named Alcina, who had access to the stronghold, and imagined that he had corrupted the fort-major, a certain Captain Sunier, who for a great sum of money undertook to leave one of its posterns open on the night of March 19th. Campoverde, who loved plots and intrigues, arranged to have his men ready outside the ditch on the appointed night. Unfortunately the officer who was supposed to be a traitor was only

it is impossible that 27 officers should be hit and only 239 men—the proportion of 1 to 9 is incredible, and the loss must have been more like 600. Schepeler and the Spaniards put it at 1,200, which is too high.

[1] See vol. iii. p. 24.

feigning discontent and treason, and kept informing Maurice Mathieu, the governor of Barcelona, of all the details of the plot. It was allowed to proceed, in order that a sharp blow might be inflicted on the Spaniards. Before the appointed night Campoverde suddenly marched the divisions of Sarsfield and Courten to the immediate vicinity of Barcelona, and sent forward from them a body of 800 grenadiers, who were to execute the actual *coup de main*. They were allowed to descend into the ditch of Monjuich, and to approach the postern, when the whole of the ramparts were lighted up with cressets and fire-balls, and a furious fire was opened upon them. The head of the column was blown to pieces, a hundred men were killed and wounded at the first volley, and four officers and many of the rank and file taken prisoners, before the remainder could scramble off in the darkness. The supports hurriedly retired, and the business was over—save that Maurice Mathieu caused the commissary Alcina to be shot in public next morning as a warning to traitors. Such plots seldom succeed, but that they must not be too much disregarded as a source of danger was shown only a few weeks later, when Figueras, the second fortress of Catalonia, was successfully surprised by the Spaniards, as the result of a conspiracy exactly similar to that which failed at Barcelona [1].

The unfortunate affair at Monjuich was not the only sign of the revived activity of the Catalans under the leadership of Campoverde, a busy and active man, but (as subsequent events showed) one lacking both resolution and true strategic instinct. He was one of those who take many schemes in hand, but fail for want of determination at the critical moment, and was a very poor substitute for that hard fighter Henry O'Donnell, whose place he had been so eager to seize. On March 3rd he made a vain attack to recover the fort of San Felipé de Balaguer—marching with Courten's division of 4,000 men he beat the French 117th out of Perello, where it was covering Tortosa, and laid siege to the fort. But General Habert came up with a force from the garrison to reinforce the 117th, and the attack had to be given up almost as soon as it was begun. More fruitful were some attacks of the *somatenes* of northern Catalonia on convoys passing between Gerona and Hostalrich. And

[1] See below, sect. xxviii. chap. i.

Sarsfield, pushing forward to Cervera, usefully restrained the foraging of Macdonald's cavalry in the region east of Lerida. But all this came to little, and Campoverde's efforts seemed to have no very visible results, and certainly did nothing decisive to prevent Suchet and Macdonald from completing their preparations for the siege of Tarragona.

It was much the same in Aragon, where Villacampa and Carbajal were contending in the mountains of the south with the garrisons which held Daroca, Alcañiz, Teruel, and the other chief towns of this rugged and thinly peopled district. The fall of Tortosa had set free for the moment many troops of the 3rd Corps, and Suchet employed them in scouring the country between these posts, and endeavouring to clear away the *partidas* from their chief rallying-places. Flying columns under Generals Paris and Abbé marched up and down the sierras in the vile weather of February, expelled the insurrectionary Junta of Aragon from Cuenca, which was at that time its head quarters, and chased Carbajal to Moya, where the frontiers of Castile, Aragon, and Valencia meet. The Empecinado came over the mountains, from his usual beat in the Guadalaxara country, to help the Aragonese, but had small success. Yet the net result of all this hunting was little. 'This expedition,' says Suchet himself, 'which took two brigades over the border into Castile for twelve days, procured us a few hundred prisoners; a more useful thing was the destruction of some small manufactures of arms. But we were to see ten times, nay a hundred times more, these partisans appearing once again in the plains; they always surrounded us, were always dispersed rather than defeated, and never grew discouraged[1].'

[1] Suchet, *Mémoires*, i. 266.

SECTION XXVI

FUENTES DE OÑORO AND ALBUERA

CHAPTER I

BERESFORD'S CAMPAIGN IN ESTREMADURA. THE FIRST SIEGE OF BADAJOZ. MARCH–APRIL 1811

On the 11th of March, as it will be remembered, Imaz—the deplorable successor of the gallant Menacho—surrendered Badajoz to Marshal Soult, despite of the messages which he had received that an Anglo-Portuguese corps was on its way for his relief. On the 14th the conqueror, appalled at the news of the battle of Barrosa and the danger of Seville, marched back to Andalusia, taking with him a brigade of dragoons and the greater part of Gazan's infantry division. He left behind him in Estremadura Mortier with a force of some 11,000 men, composed of fifteen battalions of the 5th Corps [1], five cavalry regiments [2], and a heavy proportion of artillerymen and engineers, who were required for the garrisoning of the fortress of Badajoz no less than for the siege of the small places in its vicinity, whose capture Soult had delegated to Mortier as his parting legacy.

This was a small force to leave behind, charged not only with the occupation of an extensive province, but with the duty of continuing the offensive, by attacking Campo Mayor and Albuquerque. Elvas the Marshal can hardly have hoped to assail—it was a fortress as large and in some ways stronger than Badajoz, with a garrison composed of Portuguese troops of the line Any idea of an invasion of the Alemtejo was useless, now that it was known that Masséna had departed from his old position on the Tagus. The Emperor had ordered Soult to undertake it

[1] The eleven battalions of Girard's division, and from Gazan's the 100th of the Line, and a battalion of the 21st Léger put in garrison at Badajoz.

[2] 26th Dragoons, 2nd and 10th Hussars, 21st Chasseurs à cheval, 4th Chasseurs Espagnols. Only the 10th Hussars and the 21st Chasseurs belonged to the 5th Corps.

merely for Masséna's assistance, and the 'Army of Portugal' was no longer needing such help: for good or for ill it had moved away on its own business. It remained to be seen whether Mortier would be able to carry out the orders given him, for no one in the French camp could tell whether the British relieving force for Badajoz, whose existence had been known since March 8th, had actually started for Estremadura, or had joined in the pursuit of Masséna, when it received the news that Imaz had made his disgraceful capitulation. If this force were on its way, and proved to be strong in numbers, Mortier would be thrown at once on the defensive. His duty would be to hold off the Allies till Badajoz was in a state of defence: and the repairing of the fortress would take some time, even though the greater part of its fortifications were intact, and only the Pardaleras Fort and the ruined bastions behind it required reconstruction. If the Allies came on in great force, and without delaying for a moment, it was even possible that Mortier would have to blow up Badajoz and withdraw its garrison, for it would be absurd to leave behind, in an untenable post, such a large body of men as would be required for the holding of its extensive enceinte.

The actual course of affairs in Estremadura followed logically from Wellington's orders to Beresford on the 9th and the 15th of March. On the 8th, as it will be remembered, Beresford had been directed to march to the relief of Badajoz with the 2nd and 4th Divisions and Hamilton's Portuguese, some 18,000 men. On the 9th these orders had been countermanded, on a false report that Masséna had concentrated and was offering battle behind Thomar. The 4th Division and one brigade (Hoghton's) of the 2nd were called off, and marched to join Wellington's main body. The rest of the 2nd Division and Hamilton's Portuguese stood halted, in or near Abrantes, till the intentions of the French should be discovered. It was not till March 12th that Wellington, reassured as to his adversaries' intentions, thought it possible once more to take the relief of Badajoz in hand[1].

[1] Nothing could be done in Estremadura without the 2nd Division, and D'Urban's diary shows that the orders for the 2nd Division to march into the Alemtejo were only given on the 12th. Beresford's chief of the staff notes on that day, 'Orders to General Stewart [commanding 2nd Division] to fix his head quarters at Tramagal, to move the 13th to Crato or Carra-

The troops about Abrantes were ordered to prepare to march for the Guadiana in successive brigades; the absent brigade of the 2nd Division, which had reached Thomar, was directed to retrace its steps and join the main body of that unit. But the 4th Division had gone on much further; it was well on its way towards Coimbra, and was engaged in the Pombal–Redinha operations. It was not till the 15th that Wellington thought himself able to dispatch it, along with De Grey's brigade of dragoons, to cross the Tagus in the wake of the 2nd Division. Beresford himself, who had joined the main army for a few days by Wellington's own orders, was not given his final instructions and sent off to the south till the following morning.

But before the moment at which Beresford started, the whole face of affairs had been changed by the news, received on the 14th, that Badajoz had surrendered on the 11th. Wellington was not prepared for this blow. 'I had received on the 9th,' he wrote to Lord Liverpool, 'accounts of a most favourable nature, from which I was induced to believe not only that the place was in no danger, but that it was in fact untouched: that its fire was superior to that of the enemy, that it was in no want of provisions and ammunition, had sustained no loss, excepting that of the governor Menacho, and was able and likely to hold out for a month. General Imaz, a person of equally good reputation, had succeeded to the command, and great confidence was reposed in him. . . . I had called up to the army the 4th Division of infantry and the brigade of heavy cavalry, under the conviction that Badajoz would hold out for the time during which it would be necessary to employ them. Experience has shown that I could not have done without these troops, and it is also clear that, if I had left them behind, they could not have saved Badajoz, which the governor surrendered on the day after he received my assurances

gueira [both in the Alemtejo south from Abrantes], and to let the troops remain as at present—unless it should become necessary to concentrate for the protection of the Bridge of Tancos.' This shows that Wellington's statement to Lord Liverpool on March 14th (*Dispatches*, vii. 360) that 'troops had marched from Thomar on the 9th, and that part of Sir William Beresford's division, which had not passed the Tagus, was put in motion, and that their head had arrived within three marches of Elvas,' can apply at most to Hamilton's Portuguese.

that he should be relieved, and my entreaties that he would hold out to the last moment[1].'

As far as the argument from time goes, it is clear that Wellington is stating indisputable facts. Supposing that he had not countermanded on the 9th of March the orders to Beresford which he had given on the previous night, and that the three divisions designated for service in Estremadura had marched with unrelaxing vigour, the head of their column could not have been further forward than Arronches (if they took the Portalegre road) or Estremos (if they took the Elvas road) at the moment when Imaz surrendered. As the former of these points is about twenty-five and the latter about thirty miles from Badajoz, the capitulation would not have been prevented. For the governor was determined to surrender, and did so in full knowledge of the fact, transmitted by semaphore from Elvas[2], that a relieving expedition was in hand. Whether the nearest allied troops were (as was actually the case) at Abrantes or (as might have been the case) at Estremos, would not have affected him. For, as the proceedings recorded at his council of war show, he concealed from his officers the news that succour was promised, and allowed one of them to put down in the *procès verbal* of the proceedings the statement that 'there was no official news whatever that any army of succour was in movement.' Such official news Imaz possessed, through the semaphore messages sent on by General Leite at Elvas, so that it is evident that he kept them from the knowledge of his subordinates.

If Badajoz had held out for a fortnight after March 9th,—and Wellington supposed that it was well able to defend itself for a whole month—the relieving column would have been in good time. The dispatch of March 12th set in motion two divisions from near Abrantes, that of the 15th sent on the third from the banks of the Ceira. Steady marches of twenty miles a day, or a little less, would have brought Stewart and Hamilton to the neighbourhood of Badajoz on the 17th, and Cole with the 4th Division and the dragoon brigade on the

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, March 14. *Dispatches*, vii. 360–1.

[2] See p. 60 above.

24th[1]. If, as is probable, Beresford had waited for the arrival of the last-named force before presenting himself in front of the French lines, the 24th of March would have been the critical day. It is hard to believe that Soult could have fought to advantage, since he must have left so many men to blockade Badajoz that he could not have faced Beresford with more than 12,000 sabres and bayonets, numbers inadequate to hold off the 18,000 Anglo-Portuguese who formed the allied Army of Estremadura. It is quite probable that he might have raised the siege, and offered battle with his whole army, somewhere south of Badajoz. But into these possibilities it is profitless to inquire.

Since, however, Wellington and Beresford knew on the night of the 14th that Imaz had surrendered, there was no longer the same need for haste that existed down to this moment, and the advance of the Anglo-Portuguese army was made at a moderate pace. Hamilton's Portuguese were at Portalegre by the 17th, the 2nd Division came in on the 19th and 20th. Beresford himself appeared on the latter day, having ridden through from the neighbourhood of Coimbra in four days. The 4th Division, which had made an admirable march, a hundred and ten miles of mountain road in six days, came up on the 22nd. On this day, therefore, the whole 18,000 men of the expeditionary force were collected within forty miles of Badajoz, and Beresford had to make up his mind as to the course of his campaign. The orders given to him by Wellington had been to concentrate at Portalegre and attack the French, who (as it had now been ascertained) were moving out to besiege the little Portuguese fortress of Campo Mayor, just across the frontier. The small Spanish force under Castaños at Estremos—the wrecks of the old Army of Estremadura—was to be called up to assist[2]. Wellington, who did not know of Soult's departure for Seville,

[1] Cole actually reached Portalegre on the 22nd, so could have been in front of Badajoz on the 24th.

[2] Wellington to Beresford, March 18th (*Dispatches*, vii. 372), 'You had better lose no time in moving up to Portalegre, and attack Soult, if you can, at Campo Mayor. I will come to you if I can, but if I cannot do not wait for me. Get Castaños to join you from Estremos with any Spanish troops he can bring. You must be two days marching from Portalegre to Campo Mayor, I believe.'

thought that he could not possibly collect enough men, after garrisoning Badajoz and Olivenza, to enable him to face Beresford. In a supplementary dispatch he told his colleague that he thought it most likely that the Marshal would go south of the Guadiana without accepting battle. In that case the allied army must be careful, when following him, not to trust its communications and line of advance or retreat to any temporary bridge, but must use the Portuguese riverside fortress of Jerumenha as its base, and construct there a bridge composed of twenty Spanish pontoon-boats, which (as Wellington was informed) had been floated down from Badajoz before the siege of that place began. Beresford was to construct a strong *tête-du-pont* on the Spanish bank to cover this bridge[1], and might then move forward and invest Badajoz if he were able.

A most prescient note occurs in this dispatch, which seems as if it were written in prophetical foresight of what was to happen at Campo Mayor five days later. 'The cavalry is the most delicate arm we possess. We have few officers who have practical knowledge of the mode of using it, or who have ever seen more than two regiments together. To these circumstances add that the defeat of, or any great loss sustained by, our cavalry in these open grounds would be a misfortune, amounting almost to a defeat of the whole; you will therefore see the necessity of keeping your cavalry as much as possible *en masse*, and in reserve, to be thrown in at the moment when opportunity offers for striking a decisive blow.' It looks almost as if Wellington knew that General Long, who commanded Beresford's cavalry, was going to make the very mistakes that he actually committed on the first collision with the enemy.

The moment that the 4th Division and De Grey's dragoons reached Portalegre, Beresford began his march on Campo Mayor (March 22) sending out Colborne's and Lumley's brigades of the 2nd Division to Arronches, and the Portuguese cavalry brigade of Otway to Azumar. This last-named unit had been watching the frontier between the Tagus and the Guadiana ever since Masséna's retreat from Santarem, and joined the 2nd Divi-

[1] Wellington to Beresford, March 20 (*Dispatches*, vii. 374–5); some details added from D'Urban's diary, which do not appear in this dispatch.

sion on the 20th of March. Hamilton's Portuguese infantry division was to follow next day, the 4th Division was to be allowed two days' rest after its fatiguing march from the Ceira, and was only to start on the 24th [1]. On the 25th the whole army was to be in front of Campo Mayor.

It remains to speak of the position in which the enemy was found. Between the 14th of March, when Soult departed from Seville, and the 25th, when Beresford's army made its sudden and quite unexpected descent into the middle of the French forces, only eleven days elapsed; but Mortier had turned them to good account, and had more than fulfilled all that had been expected of him. On the very day that Soult started for Seville he marched against Campo Mayor, with nine battalions of infantry, a cavalry brigade, and part of the siege-train which had just captured Badajoz. One other battalion was left as garrison in Olivenza, the six that remained from the corps were told off for Badajoz, where General Philippon had been appointed governor. With the aid of three companies of sappers they were already busily engaged in levelling their own old siege-works, and commencing the repairs to the battered front of the walls. Mortier conceived that there could not be any danger in carrying out the orders that Soult had left, for he could find no traces of any hostile force in his vicinity, save the Portuguese garrison of Elvas, and the 4,000 men who formed the wrecks of Mendizabal's army. This demoralized force had rallied at Campo Mayor, but on receiving the news of the fall of Badajoz retired in haste to Estremos, twenty miles within the Portuguese frontier. Their presence there was a danger rather than a defence to the Alemtejo, for not only did they consume some magazines collected there by Wellington's orders for the use of the expeditionary force, but they plundered recklessly in the neighbouring villages, and committed such outrages that the Portuguese Government was almost forced to take military measures against them [2]. Mortier had nothing to fear from this quarter, while

[1] All these details are from D'Urban's Journal.

[2] The consumption of the Estremos magazines by Mendizabal's men will be found mentioned in the pamphlet (written under Beresford's direction) called 'Strictures on Napier's Peninsular War' [London, 1832]. 'When the Marshal (Beresford) put his corps in motion from the Tagus

he could hear no news of the approach of any British force from the direction of the Tagus. The 2nd Division and Hamilton's Portuguese, it will be remembered, had only been ordered to resume their movement towards Estremadura on the 13th, by Wellington's dispatch of the 12th, and when Mortier started from Badajoz they were only just commencing their advance from the neighbourhood of Abrantes towards Crato and Portalegre, and were very nearly a hundred miles away, so that it was impossible that he should get any information concerning them.

Campo Mayor was an old-fashioned fortress, which had not been remodelled since the War of the Spanish Succession, its greatest weakness was that an outlying fort (São João), only 200 yards from the walls in a commanding position, had been dismantled, but not blown up and levelled to the ground. It overlooked one of the bastions of the place, and had only to be seized in order to provide an admirable starting-place for operations against the enceinte. No serious attention had been paid to Campo Mayor of late, the much stronger place of Elvas, only eleven miles away, having absorbed all the attention of the Portuguese government. The Spaniards had been garrisoning it for the last six months, but when they hastily departed the Governor of Elvas threw into it half a battalion of the Portalegre Militia (about 300 men) and a company of artillery. This handful of men, aided by the Ordenança of the place, were all that were at the disposition of the very gallant and resourceful old engineer officer, Major José Joaquim Talaya, who was left in charge of the place. As the population was under 3,000 souls, the levy of the Ordenança cannot have amounted to more than 300 men, and many of these (as was still the case in most parts of Portugal) had no firearms, but only pikes. But the chief

he was informed that the British Commissary in the Alemtejo had from 200,000 to 300,000 rations in store for his use. But this officer had also been ordered to supply the Spanish division lately in that province, and (most incautiously) issued for its service whatever its commander required. Owing to this inadvertence on the part of the Commissary (whose name, I think, was Thompson), when Marshal Beresford arrived the store was *absolutely empty*' [p. 61]. His name *was* Thompson, and he was immediately superseded by Wellington's order (*Dispatches*, vii. 426).

magistrate (*juiz de fora*), José Carvalho, served at the head of them with great energy, and we are assured that (contrary to what might have been expected) the citizens took a more creditable part than the militiamen in the defence [1].

With no regulars save the company of artillery, and no more than 800 men in all to protect a long enceinte, it might have been expected that Talaya could make no defence at all—indeed he might have evacuated the place without any blame. But being a man of fine resolution, and recognizing the fact that he was doing the greatest possible service by detaining 7,000 French before his walls, and thereby covering Elvas and allowing time for Beresford to arrive, he resolved to hold out as long as possible. The French seized Fort São João on the night of their arrival (March 14th) and opened trenches on each side of it, commencing at the same time three batteries, of which two were sheltered by the dismantled work. Next morning two of these works were in a position to open fire on the town, since the heavy guns for them had only to come from Badajoz, a mere nine miles away.

Despite of this Talaya held out for seven days of bombardment and open trenches (15th–21st March). He concentrated all his artillery on the approaches and the breaching-batteries, and for some time held his own. On the 19th a breach was opened in the projecting bastion (de Concelho), but the Governor refused a summons to surrender, and actually beat off an assault that night. On the following day the whole face of the bastion began to crumble, and, since further resistance was hopeless, Talaya accepted the terms offered him by Mortier—viz. that the garrison should lay down its arms if not relieved within twenty-four hours, the Militia and Ordenança not to be regarded as prisoners of war, but to be allowed to stay in or retire to their homes, on condition that they should not again bear arms against the French. A similar favour was extended to the Governor himself, who was allowed, 'on account of his great age,' says the capitulation, to retire to his own residence on giving his word of honour not to serve again [2]. As the whole

[1] Soriano da Luz, iii. pp. 531–2.

[2] Colonel Dickson met Talaya only two days after the surrender and had an interesting interview with him. See Dickson's *Journal*, i. p. 366.

garrison, save the artillery, were irregular troops, Mortier took over less than 100 prisoners. Some fifty guns, many of them of very antique and useless fabric, and 10,000 rations of biscuit were captured. The delay of twenty-four hours in the surrender of the town turned out very unluckily for Mortier, as it just gave time for Beresford and his army to arrive, only four days after the surrender, before the place had been dismantled or injured.

The eight-day defence of the absolutely untenable Campo Mayor contrasts in the strongest fashion with that of the neighbouring Spanish fortress of Albuquerque. This, too, was a very neglected and antiquated place, but it possessed a citadel on a high crag, which might have been held for some days against anything but heavy artillery, and it would have taken some time to erect batteries which could effectively reach it. When, however, Latour-Maubourg, with two cavalry regiments, summoned it, on March 15, the Governor at once began to parley, and on being told that infantry and guns were coming forward, actually opened his gates next day, before the two battalions and two guns sent by Mortier arrived. This demoralized officer was Major-General José Cagigal; his garrison consisted of two battalions of the Estremaduran regiment of Fernando VII, about 800 men, and a few artillerymen with seventeen brass guns of position. This was, on the whole, the most disgraceful surrender made during the whole Peninsular War—it can only be compared to the celebrated capitulation of Stettin in 1806, when the Prussian general, in an exactly similar fashion, yielded a fortress to a brigade of hussars who were impudent enough to summon it. But Stettin was a far worse case than Albuquerque—since it was a modern stronghold with a garrison of no less than 6,000 men.

After the surrender of Albuquerque, Latour-Maubourg sent on a regiment of dragoons to Valencia de Alcantara, the last fortified place in Spanish hands between the Guadiana and the Tagus. The small garrison evacuated it, and the dragoons, after bursting seven guns found within its walls, and blowing up its gates (March 17), returned to Badajoz.

He can find no praise high enough for the old engineer officer. D'Urban also speaks of him in most appreciative terms.

The news of the loss of the one Portuguese and the two Spanish fortresses did not detain Beresford a moment in his advance, indeed he was only anxious to attack the enemy before he should have either repaired and garrisoned, or else dismantled and destroyed, Campo Mayor. On the 24th, Cole's 4th Division, having had its two prescribed days of rest, marched from Portalegre to Arronches, where it caught up the cavalry and the other two divisions. Nothing had been discovered of the French, save some hussar vedettes only three miles north of Campo Mayor. It seems that Beresford's approach came as a complete surprise to Mortier, who had made no preparations to meet it. He had withdrawn the greater part of the troops who had formed the siege corps to Badajoz, and had left Latour-Maubourg to dismantle the place—for he had made up his mind not to hold it. The cavalry general retained three of his own regiments (26th Dragoons and 2nd and 10th Hussars), one infantry regiment (the 100th of the Line), a half-battery of horse artillery, with a large detachment of the military train, who were in charge not only of the siege-guns lately used, but of thirty pieces from the walls of Campo Mayor, which it was intended to bring over to Badajoz. The rest of the Portuguese guns were to be burst, as useless and antiquated. The engineers were selecting sections of the enceinte, which were to be mined and blown up. The whole French force was about 900 sabres and 1,200 bayonets, plus the detachments of the auxiliary arms —perhaps 2,400 men in all[1]. There was a very fair chance of capturing it entire, owing to the careless way in which Latour-Maubourg kept watch. The presence of scouting parties of Portuguese dragoons had been reported to him[2]. But probably he attached little importance to their presence in this direction. There had been cavalry of that nation on the Estremaduran frontier ever since January.

[1] There is great difficulty in making out what were the French cavalry regiments, but Martinien's lists show losses in the 26th Dragoons (eight officers) and 2nd Hussars, and Long speaks positively of the 10th Hussars as present also.

[2] D'Urban, reconnoitring with one, was sighted and chased a little way by French hussars. See C. E. Long's vindication of his uncle, *General Long's Military Reputation* [London, 1832], pp. 74–5.

At half-past ten o'clock on the very rainy morning of the 25th, Beresford's army was advancing on Campo Mayor in three converging columns, the bulk of the 2nd Division preceded by De Grey's dragoons on the high-road, Hamilton's Portuguese division on a by-path over a ridge to the east of the road, with the 13th Light Dragoons and two Portuguese squadrons in their front, Colborne's brigade and the remaining Portuguese horse on a corresponding ridge, some way to the western or right side of the *chaussée*. Cole followed a mile in the rear as reserve. The French outposts were found as on the preceding day, only three miles outside the town. General Latour-Maubourg chanced to be visiting them, probably in tardy consequence of the reports of the previous day. When attacked they retired skirmishing, to delay as far as possible the advance of Beresford's leading squadrons. Latour-Maubourg, seeing that the Allies were coming up on a broad front, and at least 15,000 strong, rode back hastily into the town, ordered the drums to beat, and directed infantry and cavalry alike to abandon their baggage, and to form up without a moment's delay on the glacis outside the southern gate for a retreat. A column of sixteen heavy guns from the walls of Campo Mayor and the siege-train, with practically no escort, had started some little time back, and was on its way to Badajoz along the high-road before the alarm was given [1]. The allied cavalry, on coming in sight of the town from the ridge to its north, discovered the enemy just moving off, the infantry regiment in column of route on the road, with one hussar regiment in front of it and another in rear, while the 26th Dragoons, some little way ahead, was covering the rest from being intercepted on the high-road, for Latour-Maubourg had seen that his danger lay in the probability that Beresford would strike in, with the horse of his van, between him and Badajoz, and so force him to fight his way through, under pain of being surrounded and captured if he failed. This indeed was Beresford's intention, but being impressed with Wellington's warning not to risk or lose his cavalry, he had

[1] Belmas says that it had started *déjà*, and must be right: while Lapène, who thinks that it was loaded up and sent off after the alarm, fails to account for its being six miles along the road when surprised. Heavy guns travel slowly. Beresford corroborates Belmas.

ordered General Long, who was in command of the division of that arm, not to commit himself against a superior force, and 'to wait for the infantry to come up if he were in any doubt; yet if the opportunity to strike a blow occurs he must avail himself of it[1].' The whole cavalry force with the army was only eleven British squadrons and five Portuguese, the latter very weak, and the total number of sabres was about 1,500, a very small allowance for an army of over 18,000 men, and therefore very precious.

When Latour-Maubourg saw the British divisions coming on in the distance, he marched off with all possible speed, and had such a start that his column, whose pace was set by the quick step of the infantry, had got nearly three miles from Campo Mayor before it was seriously threatened. General Long had, by Beresford's orders, directed his squadrons to sweep east of the walls of the town, out of gunshot, in case there should chance to have been a garrison left behind. The sweep was a long one, because a ravine was discovered which forced the regiments to turn further eastward than was at first intended. They came up in two detachments, one formed by the 13th Light Dragoons and Otway's Portuguese, more to the left (east), the other of De Grey's dragoons further to the right (west). The first body was nearly level with the dragoon regiment which was moving ahead of the French column, the other was not so far to the front, being 400 or 500 yards away from the rear flank of the French. The nearest British infantry and guns, Colborne's brigade and Cleeves's German battery accompanying it, were out of sight, two miles to the rear, hidden by undulations of the ground; so was Beresford himself and his staff, who were riding ahead of the main body.

Seeing a fight forced on him, Latour-Maubourg resolved to accept it. He had a force of all arms, and thought himself strong enough to beat off cavalry unsupported by infantry or guns, even though they outnumbered his own horsemen in the proportion of five to three. Accordingly he suddenly halted

[1] This is Long's account of the orders given by Beresford (p. 75 of the *Vindication of the Military Reputation of the late General Long*, by C. E. Long), in a letter from the general to General Le Marchant. This agrees pretty well with Beresford's version of the facts, and is no doubt correct.

and formed his infantry in battalion squares on the high-road, with the hussars flanking them in deep order, while the dragoon regiment, with its right wing drawn back and its left wing not far from the leading hussars, formed a line at an obtuse angle to the main body, ready to deliver a flanking charge on the British and Portuguese if they should attack the infantry.

Long, considering, as he says, that he was strong enough to attempt the 'blow' of which Beresford had spoken, resolved first to drive off the French dragoon regiment which threatened his flank, and then to fall upon the hussars and infantry. He sent orders to De Grey and the heavy dragoons to close in upon the rear and left flank of the French, from whom they were still separated by a ridge, but to hold off till the rest of the troops had disposed of the covering cavalry. He then advanced with the light squadrons, English and Portuguese, to get beyond the French dragoons—his line was formed with two Portuguese squadrons (7th regiment) on the extreme left, then the two and a half squadrons of the 13th British Light Dragoons[1], and to the right the three remaining Portuguese squadrons (1st regiment).

Seeing that Long was manœuvring to outflank him, Latour-Maubourg ordered the 26th Dragoons to charge before the movement was far advanced. The British 13th formed to their front, and started to meet them; the two lines met with a tremendous crash, neither giving way, and were mingled for a few moments in desperate hand to hand fighting[2], in which Colonel Chamorin, the French brigadier, was slain in a personal combat with a corporal named Logan of the 13th. Presently the French broke, and fled in disorder along and beside the Badajoz road. Then followed one of those wild and senseless pursuits which always provoked Wellington's wrath, and induced him to say in bitterness that the ordinary British cavalry

[1] A squadron was absent with Colborne's column and another troop on distant reconnaissance work, and the regiment was not much over 200 sabres.

[2] Napier's story that they charged *through* each other, formed up front to rear, and then charged each other again is strongly denied by Beresford as 'purely suppositious' (*Strictures*, pp. 152-3), and not confirmed by Long or any other eye-witness.

Field Marshal Sir William Carr Beresford

regiment was 'good for nothing but galloping[1].' General Long says in his account of the affair that he found it impossible to stop or rally the Light Dragoons, and therefore sent after them the two squadrons of the 7th Portuguese, to act as a support. But the Portuguese put on a great pace to come up with the 13th, got excited in pursuing stray knots of French dragoons, broke their order, and finally joined in the headlong chase as recklessly as their comrades.

The ride was incredibly long and disorderly, quite in the style of Prince Rupert at Edgehill. It was continued for no less than seven miles; four miles from the place where it had started, the Light Dragoons came on the artillery convoy of sixteen heavy guns which had left Campo Mayor in the early morning, and had crawled on almost to the gates of Badajoz; the small escort was dispersed, and the drivers were cut down or chased off the road. Many of the Portuguese stopped to make prize of the horses—most valuable personal plunder—and went off with them in small parties towards the allied camp. The pursuers should have stopped here. There was no object in chasing any further the few surviving French dragoons, who were scattered broadcast. The guns, with a long train of caissons and carts, were left standing beside the road, but little attention was paid to these valuable trophies. One or two were rehorsed and turned towards the British lines by some officers of the 13th. The main body of the pursuers, however, did not stop with the convoy, but, still sabring at the routed French, rode two miles and a half further, till they hurtled against the bridge-head fortifications of Badajoz. They were only stopped by being shelled from Fort San Cristobal, and fired on by the garrison of the *tête-du-pont*. It is said by one French authority[2] that the leading dragoons actually reached the barrier-gate of the covered way of the latter work, and were shot there. Marshal Mortier, learning what had happened, sallied out of the fortress with a cavalry regiment and four battalions, captured quite a number of straggling dragoons, whose horses had fallen or given out in the wild ride, and found the bulk of the artillery convoy standing lonely and teamless by the wayside. It was dragged

[1] See vol. i. p. 119.

[2] Belmas, iii. p. 557.

along into Badajoz, save one howitzer and six caissons, which were left behind on the approach of Beresford's main body. Mortier also picked up near the place where the convoy was lying, and brought into Badajoz, Latour-Maubourg's column, whose further fortunes need to be detailed.

When the 13th Light Dragoons and the 7th Portuguese went off on their mad escapade, General Long found himself left in front of the main French force, with only the three squadrons of the 1st Portuguese cavalry, which had formed his reserve, and the Heavy Brigade, distant half a mile from him, and on the other side of the French line. It was apparently his intention to charge the enemy with these troops, a most hazardous experiment, for the French with a regiment of 1,200 infantry in square, flanked by four squadrons of hussars, were dangerous to deal with. In all the Peninsular War there was only one occasion (at Garcia Hernandez in 1812) where formed squares of either side were broken by the cavalry of the other, and the 100th Ligne on this occasion had 500 hussars to support them. There was some delay while Long was sending an aide-de-camp to the Heavy Brigade to bid them prepare to attack [1], and, seeing him holding back, Latour-Maubourg started off his column once more along the high-road, the infantry marching in square, with two squadrons of hussars in front and two behind. To stop him from moving on, Long brought forward the 1st Portuguese to check the hussars. But when they advanced toward them, and were about to engage, the front side of the leading French battalion square opened a distant fire against their flank. Surprised by this, for they had not realized that they were within effective range of the hostile infantry, the three Portuguese squadrons broke and galloped off, pursued by the hussars for some little way [2].

[1] So, at least, I gather from Long's narrative: he says that 'he sent an order for the advance of De Grey's brigade' (p. 34), and in another place (p. 53), that 'it was only necessary to charge and throw into confusion the cavalry at their (the French) head and rear, and the object was accomplished.' The object is defined as the 'annihilation' of the French column, which Long thinks would have surrendered.

[2] This regiment lost one officer and ten men killed, and thirty-two wounded, beside some prisoners, in the abortive advance. The French statement that the 2nd Hussars made 'de belles charges' is therefore

At this moment Marshal Beresford and his staff came upon the scene, on the ridge near De Grey's brigade, and saw the three Portugueses quadrons rallying at a distance, and still in disorder, while the heavy dragoons were preparing to attack. On inquiring what had become of the 13th and the rest of the Portuguese, Beresford was told by one of his staff[1] that they had been cut off and were believed to have been captured. Horrified at this news, which brought to his mind all Wellington's warnings, Beresford forbade the Heavy Brigade to charge, and bade them hold off, till some infantry and guns should come up. He was indubitably right in so doing, for, as all previous and later experience proved, it was most unlikely that they would have broken the French squares.

He sent back for the nearest infantry, which was Colborne's brigade, and some guns. Meanwhile the enemy continued moving off at a great pace, followed at a distance by the heavy dragoons, while Long and the three rallied Portuguese squadrons marched parallel with their flank. The two parties had proceeded several miles in this way, when the 13th Light Dragoons came in sight, returning from the direction of Badajoz, and their Portuguese companions with them. Soon after, two guns of Cleeves's battery got up, unlimbered, and opened a fire at long range against the rear of the French. It had some effect, but the enemy kept his ranks and continued to move on as fast as possible, leaving his dead and wounded in the road. The artillery horses were exhausted and unable to keep up, wherefore Beresford ordered the whole force to halt, saying that without infantry there was nothing more to be done. At this moment Colborne's brigade was no more than half a mile behind according to Long and certain other witnesses[2]. But on the

evidently justified. But it was the flanking infantry fire which demoralized the Portuguese (Long's *Vindication*, p. 49).

[1] By all accounts this was Baron Trip, a Dutch *émigré* officer, who was serving on Beresford's staff. The statement was very astounding, even incredible, considering that the country was open and undulating. But it was almost equally incredible that the 13th and 7th Portuguese should have pursued the French dragoons completely out of sight, six miles away, without leaving a man behind.

[2] Colonel Gabriel, a staff officer of the 2nd Division, says that Colburne's brigade was only 500 yards in rear of the heavy dragoons, and

other hand, Mortier with 2,000 infantry and a cavalry regiment from Badajoz was visible, waiting for Latour-Maubourg near the spot where the dismantled convoy was standing. The two French forces joined, and retired into the fortress with nearly all the recaptured guns—only one and some caissons remained to be picked up by Beresford's advance.

The loss of the British on this occasion, all in the 13th Light Dragoons[1], was 10 killed, 3 officers and 24 men wounded, and 22 prisoners; among the Portuguese 1st and 7th cavalry an officer and 13 men killed, 40 wounded, and 55 prisoners—a total of over 150. The French suffered more—the 26th Dragoons alone had 8 officers[2] and over 100 men killed, wounded, and taken, the train and artillery had been dreadfully cut up at the capture of the convoy, and the infantry had lost 3 officers and many men by the fire of Cleeves's guns. The total casualties were over 200[3]. But the moral effect of a combat is not judged by a mere comparison of losses, and the British officers were much disappointed. Beresford and his friends held that Long had by mismanagement wasted 150 precious cavalrymen—Long declared that if Beresford had not taken the command out of his hands he would have captured the whole French column. This last claim was absolutely unreasonable: it is far more likely that he would merely have caused severe loss to the two heavy dragoon regiments by persisting. The Marshal and the General were on bad terms from this moment onward, and the former took the next opportunity given him to remove the latter from the chief command of the allied cavalry. The most curious comment on the combat of Campo Mayor is Napier's statement that 'the 13th Light Dragoons were severely reprimanded for pursuing so eagerly. But the unsparing admiration of the whole army consoled them!' Pursuing eagerly is a mild expression for riding seven

the French still in sight when Beresford ordered the final halt. See Long's *Vindication*, p. 65.

[1] Except three wounded in the 3rd Dragoon Guards in skirmishes with the hussars of the French rearguard.

[2] One killed, six wounded, one prisoner. For names see Martinien's lists and supplement thereto.

[3] Belmas says 175, but this is too low.

miles off the battlefield, and on to the glacis of a hostile fortress. Wellington's comment was that 'the undisciplined ardour of the 13th Dragoons and the 7th regiment of Portuguese cavalry is not of the description of the determined bravery of soldiers confident in their discipline and their officers. Their conduct was that of a rabble galloping as fast as their horses could carry them, after an enemy to whom they could do no further mischief when they were broken: the pursuit was continued for an unlimited distance, and sacrificed substantial advantages, and all the objects of the operation, by want of discipline[1].' A similar reproof was published in a General Order, to be read to the cavalry.

The only really satisfactory result of the combat of Campo Mayor was that Beresford recovered the town intact, with some guns which had not yet been sent off to Badajoz, and a considerable amount of stores, including 8,000 rations of biscuit. The place was at once re-garrisoned with the Faro regiment of militia from Elvas, who rapidly repaired the breach. It was tenable again in a few days.

On the 26th Beresford discovered that the French had withdrawn entirely beyond the Guadiana, keeping nothing north of it save the bridge-head and Fort San Cristobal at Badajoz. All accounts agreed that after deducting the garrison of that place Mortier could not have more than 8,000, or at the most 10,000, men available for the field, so that there was no reason why Wellington's orders to thrust him out of Estremadura, and besiege Badajoz, should not be carried out. It was particularly directed in those orders that the expeditionary force should cross the Guadiana at Jerumenha, and make a bridge at that place, only a few miles from the strong fortress of Elvas, the base of its line of communications[2]. Accordingly the 2nd Division and

[1] Wellington to Beresford, from Celorico, March 28 (*Dispatches*, vii. 412). By an odd error Wellington wrote the 1st Portuguese, but it was the 7th which joined in the hunt.

[2] Napier censures Beresford for not crossing at Merida, thirty miles east of Badajoz. But (1) Wellington's orders directed him to use Jerumenha; (2) to march to Merida would have been to pass across the front of an enemy who had a bridge-head at Badajoz, from which he could push out detachments to cut the line of communication, Campo Mayor to Merida; (3) Elvas was the only possible base, and the only place where

Hamilton's Portuguese marched to Elvas on the 26th, leaving Cole and the 4th Division (still much fatigued by their long march) for a day at Campo Mayor. There can be no doubt that if Beresford had been able to cross at Jerumenha on the 27th or 28th he would have compelled the French to retire southward at once, and might have invested Badajoz, then not yet fully repaired, as soon as he chose. But a most tiresome series of hindrances, for which it seems unjust to blame the Anglo-Portuguese commander, now began to crop up. The first and most fatal was that the stock of Spanish pontoon boats which, as he had been told by Wellington, would be found at Elvas or Jerumenha, was not forthcoming. Only five were discovered: two complete bridge-equipages had been kept by Imaz at Badajoz, and were now in the hands of the French. But twenty large pontoons, as the engineers declared, was the least number which would suffice to bridge the Guadiana. An attempt was made to seek for river-craft to eke out the pontoons. But by Wellington's orders all the boats on the river for many miles had been destroyed, when Soult entered Estremadura in January. Some Portuguese pontoons were ordered from Lisbon, but it would be a week or so before they could be carted across the Alemtejo. Meanwhile Captain Squire, the engineer charged with the bridge-building, offered to lay trestles across the shallower part of the bed of the Guadiana on either bank, and to moor the five pontoons in the deep channel in the middle to join them. To this Beresford assented, and the bridge-place was selected on the 30th: Squire promised that the whole should be completed on the 3rd of April; he could not finish it earlier, as the wood for the trestles had to be found, cut down, and shaped *ab initio*.

The delay of a week thus caused was of the less importance, however, because of another contretemps. There were no stores ready to feed the army when it should cross the Guadiana. The 200,000 rations at Estremos which Wellington (as it will be remembered) had promised to Beresford, were found to have been entirely consumed by the wreck of Mendizabal's army,

magazines could be safely formed, or munitions, siege artillery, &c., procured; (4) the road Campo Mayor–Merida was very bad; (5) Merida was within reach of the French Army of the Centre, which had detachments at Truxillo and Almaraz.

who had been lying there for the last three weeks. There was nothing to lade upon the mules and carts of the expeditionary force; the troops were in great difficulties from day to day, ate the 8,000 rations at Campo Mayor, and were finally forced to indent upon the stores of the garrison of Elvas, which ought to have been sacred to the defence of the town.

Lastly, and this was perhaps the most important of all, the shoes of the 4th Division, which had marched continuously from the 6th to the 22nd of March, first from the Lines to Espinhal, and then from Espinhal to Portalegre, were completely worn out. Cole protested against the division being moved till it was reshod. No footgear could be found at Elvas, and though an immediate requisition was sent to Lisbon, the convoy bringing the shoes would obviously take a week or so to get up[1]. From the 26th of March to the 3rd of April Beresford was perforce immovable. This loss of eight days was apparently the reason why Badajoz did not fall into his hands a little later, for the fortifications, which were still in a dangerous state of disrepair on the 25th, were practically tenable by the second week in April. The stores in the fortress were a less important matter. Imaz when he surrendered had over a month's rations for 9,000 men, which, even when a certain amount had been consumed by Soult's field army, left a nucleus sufficient to keep the garrison of 3,000 men placed in the town by Mortier out of need for many weeks. In addition, cattle had been requisitioned all over Estremadura. The small movable force of 8,000 men which was available for observing Beresford, was now living entirely on the country-side, in order to spare the stores of Badajoz.

Beresford's delay in crossing the Guadiana, therefore, was unfortunate, but apparently inevitable, and there seems no reason to blame him for it. On April 3rd the engineers reported that the bridge at Jerumenha would be ready that evening, and

[1] These notes as to Beresford's difficulties are taken partly from the Journal of his chief of the staff, D'Urban, partly from the latter's detailed report on the Estremaduran campaign, published in 1832, but written in 1811, partly from the *Strictures on Napier's History*, vol. iii, written under Beresford's eye. The latter might be considered suspicious if they were not completely borne out by the two former, as well as by Wellington's *Dispatches*, vii. 414, 426, 432.

the three divisions concentrated on the left bank: the water was low, and a difficult ford for cavalry had been found above the bridge, by which a squadron of dragoons passed, and established a chain of pickets on the Spanish side. No French were seen abroad, though it was discovered that they still had a garrison in Olivenza, only six miles away. It is difficult to make out why no attempt was made to obstruct the building of Beresford's bridge—the enemy had five regiments of cavalry in Estremadura, and 6,000 infantry of Girard's division were available for field service. Even a small detachment with some guns would have made it impossible for the British engineers to complete their work. But the Allies found a great advantage in the fact that Mortier had just received orders to return to Paris, and had on March 26th handed over the command of all the troops on the Guadiana to Latour-Maubourg, who was a good divisional general on the battlefield, but a very indifferent strategist. All his manœuvres during the following month were weak and confused. How it came that from the 30th of March to the 7th of April no French cavalry were seen opposite Jerumenha, much less any serious force sent to disturb the bridge-building, it is impossible to conceive. By all accounts the horsemen who should have been in front of Olivenza were at this time mainly employed in scouring the villages of Central Estremadura for cattle and corn, and escorting what they could seize into Badajoz and the camp of Girard's division.

On the morning of March 4th, when the allied troops should have crossed the Guadiana, Beresford was brought the untoward news that the river had risen three feet in the night, had swept away the trestles, and forced the engineers to draw back the five pontoon boats in the central stream to the Portuguese bank. The squadron beyond the river was cut off from the army, and communication with it was only restored during the day, by rigging up a flying bridge composed of a raft and a rope. The cavalry ford above the destroyed bridge was of course impassable. Throughout the 4th and 5th the water continued to rise, from storms higher up the river apparently, for there was no rain at Jerumenha.

The position was exasperating to the highest degree. 'Establishing a permanent bridge is out of the question,' writes

D'Urban, the chief of the staff, in his journal. 'The means are anything but secure either for passing the army (tedious beyond measure, too, no doubt), or for establishing a communication afterwards for supplies and other purposes. Nevertheless the general state of things, and above all Lord Wellington's reiterated orders received this morning, render it necessary to pass[1].' The engineers, put upon their mettle, finally made the five Spanish pontoon boats into two flying bridges worked by ropes. On these a battalion of infantry was passed across the river, and stockaded itself on the other side. Later in the day (April 5) some small tin pontoons arrived from Lisbon, and out of these, helped by all the wine-casks of the neighbouring villages, collected in haste, a floating bridge was constructed, 'not very substantial, but, upon trial, found capable of admitting infantry to pass in file[2].' It was not ready till noon on the 6th, but by the two flying bridges the whole 2nd Division and three squadrons of cavalry were passed on the night of the 5th–6th. What might have happened if Latour-Maubourg had concentrated at Olivenza, and fallen on the first two or three battalions that crossed with a force of all arms, we had better not inquire[3]. A disaster on a small scale might very possibly have occurred. But not a Frenchman was seen.

During the 6th Hamilton's Portuguese passed with infinite slowness on the flying bridges, and the cask and pontoon bridge being at last completed, Cole's 4th Division and Long's cavalry began to file over it at dusk, an operation so tedious that the last of them were not over till the following dawn. Ere they were all across a 'regrettable incident' occurred: the advanced cavalry pickets were formed on the night of the 6th–7th by

[1] This must have been Wellington's Celorico dispatch of March 30, saying that 'between chevalets (trestles), boats, Spanish and English pontoons, and a ford, I should hope that the Guadiana may be passed in safety' (*Dispatches*, vii. 414.)

[2] D'Urban's *Narrative*, p. 10.

[3] Beresford maintained that troops on the right bank could be protected by the fire of the guns of Jerumenha, which is in a lofty position, commanding the Spanish shore. But they would have been of little use if the French had attacked at night. (*Strictures on Napier*, p. 177.)

Major Morris's squadron of the 13th Light Dragoons. Owing to bad staff work in the placing of them (as D'Urban and General Long both assert), the main guard of this squadron was surprised by French cavalry in the dusk of the morning, and captured almost entire, two officers and fifty men being taken. The assailants found that they had run into the camp of a whole army, and promptly retired before they could be touched.

At last Latour-Maubourg had given signs of life; this reconnaissance had been conducted by a flying column of two cavalry regiments and four battalions, under General Veilland, sent out to Olivenza from the camp of Girard's division, with the very tardy purpose of hindering Beresford's passage. Veilland reported to his chief that the enemy was across in such strength that he could do nothing. The appearance of 20,000 men on the Spanish bank of the Guadiana, so far to the south of Badajoz, placed Latour-Maubourg in a very delicate position: if he stayed twenty-four hours longer in his present camp close to Badajoz, he lost his communications with Andalusia, and might be pushed eastward up the Guadiana, out of touch with Soult, and having no retreat save towards the distant Army of the Centre. It was even possible that a rapid advance of the Allies might drive him into Badajoz, the last thing that he would desire. Accordingly he concentrated at Albuera, twelve miles south of that fortress, as a preliminary move, and prepared to fall back from thence by the great southern *chaussée*, towards Llerena and the Sierra Morena, where he would preserve, and shorten, his line of communication with Soult. Phillipon was left with 3,000 men in Badajoz, which was now quite beyond danger from a *coup de main*, and able to take care of itself for some weeks, till reinforcements should come up from Andalusia for its relief. With great unwisdom Latour-Maubourg left Olivenza garrisoned also; it was, as had been shown in January, contemptible as a fortress, even when held by a large force, and the French general placed in it only a single weak battalion of under 400 men. There were still on the walls the few guns that had been taken from the Spaniards—no more than fifteen were mounted, and several of these only on makeshift carriages. Why Latour-Maubourg chose to sacrifice a battalion it is hard to see; Napoleon wrote to Soult a month later to condemn the

policy of small garrisons in the strongest terms[1]. At the best Olivenza, when so weakly held, could not hold out for more than a few days, and if Beresford had tried to rush it by escalade, when first he arrived before its walls, he must undoubtedly have succeeded, for 400 men cannot defend three miles of enceinte against a serious assault. There were some magazines in the place, and a small hospital of sick, who could not be removed[2]. But it was obviously absurd to throw away a battalion of sound men to keep them from capture for a few days. It has been suggested that Latour-Maubourg merely wanted to gain time[3]; but the time gained was trifling—Olivenza only held out five days—and might have fallen much sooner.

Beresford's train and guns having joined him beyond the river on March 8th, he moved to Olivenza on the 9th, in an order of march ready to deploy into an order of battle in case Latour-Maubourg should turn up with his small field force. The town was summoned on the same afternoon, and when the governor refused to surrender, the 4th Division, still almost unable to move for want of the shoes which were daily expected from Lisbon, was left to besiege it, with the aid of heavy guns to be brought from Elvas, only fifteen miles away. The extreme weakness of the garrison was not known, or the Marshal would not have wasted time by ordering regular approaches to be made. The rest of the army bivouacked on the Badajoz road a few miles beyond Olivenza, and on the following day occupied Valverde, and pushed its cavalry to Albuera, cutting the *chaussée* between Badajoz and Seville. No enemy could be found, and it was ascertained that Latour-Maubourg's rearguard was at Santa Marta, ten miles to the south, and the rest of his troops far beyond it. On the 11th the infantry, minus the 4th Division,

[1] *Correspondance*, xxi. 146: 'Vous voyez que ce que j'avais prévu est arrivé, qu'on a eu la simplicité de laisser du monde dans Olivenza, et de faire prendre là 300 hommes,' &c. This was alluding to an earlier order to Soult not to make small detachments, and to blow up Olivenza.

[2] Ninety-eight sick attended by sixteen surgeons were comprised in the surrender on April 15th.

[3] This is Lapène's view, who says that the 400 gallant men were knowingly sacrificed in this hope: 'l'intérêt de l'armée a demandé le sacrifice' (p. 146).

were at Albuera, while the bulk of the cavalry marched to find out how far southward the enemy was ready to withdraw.

Central Estremadura, at any rate, was now in Beresford's hands, and he was in a position to carry out Wellington's orders to drive the 5th Corps over the Sierra Morena and invest Badajoz. In accordance with his instructions he had seen Castaños on March 30th, and settled with him that the wrecks of the old Army of Estremadura—now about 1,000 horse and 3,000 foot—should join in the campaign. Castaños, who showed himself both eager and obliging, had promised that his infantry should seize the bridge of Merida, and that, when it was occupied, his cavalry, under Penne Villemur, should join in the movement to sweep Latour-Maubourg over the mountains, operating on the eastern road (Merida–Ribera–Usagre–Llerena), while the allied cavalry took the western one (Albuera–Los Santos–Fuente Cantos–Monasterio). These promises were carried out: Morillo's infantry division occupied Merida on the 10th, and next day Penne Villemur's cavalry had reached Almendralejo.

The siege of Olivenza gave little trouble. The only difficulty was the improvising of a siege-train, even on the very modest scale required to deal with such a weak place. It was invested, as we have seen, on the 9th. On the 10th Major Alexander Dickson of the Portuguese artillery, and Captain Squire of the Engineers reconnoitred the place, and determined that the proper starting-point for the attack was the same ruined lunette, outside the walls, which the French had chosen as their first base in January. On the night of the 11th this point was occupied with the loss of one man only, killed by the enemy's ill-directed fire. A battery for six guns was constructed in the gorge of the ruined work, but the pieces themselves, which Dickson went to choose from Elvas, did not arrive till the 14th; the cask-bridge at Jerumenha being too weak to bear them, they and their ammunition had to be ferried over on the flying bridges. The six 24-pounders were placed in position that same night. At daybreak they opened, and by the time that they had fired seventy rounds each, long ere noon, a practicable breach was made in the nearest bastion. Thereupon the governor, seeing that to have stood an assault with his handful of men would have been madness, surrendered at discretion. He marched out

with only 9 officers and 357 men under arms, giving up also 96 sick, and some commissaries and medical officers. Several of his miserable stock of fifteen guns were found to be practically useless save to make a noise, for (as has already been mentioned) they were fixed not on proper carriages, but on the main timbers and wheels of ox-carts, and could not be elevated or depressed. The governor deserves some credit for having held out five days; if the Allies had been aware of the weakness of the garrison, they would have swamped it at once by an escalade.

On the next morning (April 16th) Cole and the 4th Division, who had at last received their much-needed supply of shoes, marched to join the rest of the army. A Portuguese garrison was thrown into Olivenza, but there was no intention to hold it, if the enemy should come up again. It was only a man-trap. Beresford might now have invested Badajoz, if it had pleased him so to do. But he thought it better to drive Latour-Maubourg completely out of Estremadura, and across the Sierra Morena, before taking the siege in hand. The main reason for his resolve was that it was clear that a week or ten days at least would be required to organize a battering-train at Elvas, for the bombardment and breaching of the fortress, and he thought it more profitable to spend this interval in pushing the French as far from Badajoz as possible, rather than in sitting down before it to no purpose, and waiting for the appearance of the siege-train. It was apparently an omission on Wellington's part not to have ordered General Leite, the governor of Elvas, to begin making preparations for the gathering of a park and the collection of a large body of artillerymen, on the same day that he finally launched Beresford's[1] force into Estremadura (March 16). But this had not been done, and it was not till April 18th that Major Alexander Dickson, who had already learnt what was available in Elvas while organizing the little train required for the capture of Olivenza, was directed to take in hand the much larger and more difficult task of collecting the

[1] Dickson's *Journals*, recently published by Major Leslie, R.A., are the first and most important source in which to study the two early British sieges of Badajoz, as well as the smaller matter of Olivenza. I am using them perpetually all through the following pages.

men and material destined for the siege of a first-class fortress[1]. This delay seems extraordinary: did Wellington think on March 16th that Badajoz, only five days in the hands of the French at the moment, would be incapable of defence when Beresford should appear in front of it about the 25th of that same month? It is quite possible that this would have been the case, and that the French would have blown it up, if the Jerumenha bridge had been standing ready for the passage of the army on the next day, as Wellington had supposed. The *Dispatches* give us no help on this point; Wellington speaks of investing Badajoz, but gives no hint as to how the investment was to be followed up, till March 27th, when he observes to Beresford that 'Elvas must supply the means for the attack on Badajoz, if possible; if it has them not, I must send them there; this will take time, but that cannot be avoided[2].'

Elvas, as matters turned out, did 'supply the means,' but the resources to be found there were so limited that, as was wittily said at the time by Picton, Wellington, both in May and in June 1811, 'sued Badajoz *in forma pauperis*,' and if the place had fallen it would have been almost a miracle, for no sufficient material to ensure its capture had been collected even by the month of June. The main difficulty arose from the fact that Wellington had never been provided by his Government with a siege-train. Looking upon the war in Portugal as essentially defensive in character, the Home authorities had forgotten that it might have offensive episodes, and that a great siege might not impossibly be one of them. The British army in Portugal possessed nothing in the way of artillery save the ordinary horse and field batteries (or 'troops' and 'companies' as they were then called), with their 3, 6, and 9-pounder guns. If a few hundred men were told off to heavy pieces in the Lisbon lines during the preceding autumn, it was not that they were intended for such service—they were parts of incomplete or unhorsed batteries, which had not taken the field when the campaign of 1810 began, and were waiting to complete their equipment. The British army in Portugal was absolutely destitute of artillery destined for and trained to the working of siege-guns.

[1] This date is that given by D'Urban's *Journal*.

[2] *Dispatches*, vii. 407. From Gouvea, March 27.

The only British pieces of heavy calibre used in the spring of 1811 were ships' cannon lent by the commander of the squadron in the Tagus.

For such work as was now before them, therefore, the Allies had to depend entirely on what the Portuguese arsenals could supply. But all that could be found in them was now mounted on the interminable redoubts of the Lisbon lines, save such as had been sent to strengthen Elvas, Abrantes, and Peniche. Practically every gun in Portugal was defending some work, small or great; they had all been requisitioned down to the most antique and imperfect pieces. The walls of Elvas were a perfect museum of ancient artillery: among the heaviest pieces, carefully sorted out because of their calibre, and chosen for the siege-train that was to batter Badajoz, were to be seen not only many 24-pounders bearing the arms and cyphers of the earliest kings of the house of Braganza, João and Affonso, but still older brass guns of enormous length, showing the names of Philip III and IV of Spain, and dating back to the years before 1640, when Portugal was a discontented province of the Hapsburg kings[1]. It seems almost incredible, but is actually a fact, that some of the cannon used by Wellington's men against Badajoz were just two hundred years old. Those that were not quite so antique were mainly pieces of early eighteenth-century pattern, without the later improvements invented by the French scientific artillerymen of the days of Louis XV and Louis XVI: for the Lisbon arsenal had persisted in using old models long after they had been dropped in the larger countries of Europe.

The gunners for the siege were of course mainly Portuguese, though a few were afterwards drawn from the imperfect British companies at Lisbon[2]. Those first employed were borrowed from the garrison of Elvas; they comprised a great number of recruits only partially trained, but did their best. It was the guns, not the men, that were at fault—or rather, both the guns

[1] Dickson, in his *Journal*, p. 448, specially mentions this curious fact, and notes the name of Philip III and the dates 1620, 1636, 1646, 1652 on some of the guns he used.

[2] These were the companies of Bredin, Baynes, Raynsford, and Glubb; see vol. iii. p. 559.

and the ammunition, for the Portuguese cannon-balls in store, dating from all ages, varied much in size, and Dickson had to sort each convoy of 24 lb. or 12 lb. shot into batches, some of which were rather small and some rather large, and to apportion them to particular pieces. The old brass seventeenth-century guns, being generally worn from long use, needed the biggest shot, and even these were so large in the bore that the balls fitted loosely, and the discharge suffered from 'windage.' The impact of such shot was not half what it should have been[1]. With such tools to employ, it is not wonderful that the Anglo-Portuguese artillery made a poor show at the first siege of Badajoz. But worst of all was the fact that the number of pieces was at first far too small—Elvas could only spare a certain part of the armament of its walls, and it was not till some weeks had passed that guns, British and Portuguese, could be brought up from Lisbon, and with them drafts of artillerymen of both nations. But twenty-three guns and 400 artillerymen were all that Dickson could collect for the first siege, and these were not ready till April was out; indeed, it was no small achievement to organize a siege-train of any sort between April 18th and May 6th, from the sole resources of the fortress of Elvas. Of the additional hindrance caused by the small numbers and the inexperience of the engineer officers, and the total lack of trained sappers, we shall speak in the proper place.

The space of time before the siege-train for Badajoz could be got ready was employed by Beresford in clearing southern Estremadura of the enemy. Having left a brigade of the 2nd Division at Talavera Real, a battalion of the Lusitanian Legion (from Cole's division) in Olivenza, and some squadrons of Portuguese cavalry round the southern front of Badajoz, to watch the garrison, the army marched for Santa Marta and Zafra, on the high-road to Seville, with its own cavalry in front, and Penne Villemur's Spanish squadrons on the left (April 16th–18th). The bulk of the infantry went no further forward, because Latour-Maubourg withdrew into the Sierra Morena on the rumour of its approach. The cavalry continued the pursuit —at Los Santos on the 16th its leading regiment, the 13th Light

[1] Dickson, *Journal*, pp. 405, 448.

Dragoons, had a smart affair with the French rearguard (2nd Hussars), and routed it with the loss of three officers and many men [1]. After this Latour-Maubourg never stopped till he had reached Guadalcanal, on the borders of Andalusia, evacuating Llerena and the other towns on the Estremaduran slope of the mountains (April 19th). Beresford thereupon left his British cavalry at Zafra, and Penne Villemur at Llerena, to watch the passes, while he drew back his infantry divisions to take in hand the siege of Badajoz (April 20th), with the exception of the brigade of Colborne, which was sent out with some Spanish horse to demonstrate against Latour-Maubourg, and to drive him still further southward if he showed signs of irresolution.

While these operations were in progress, there was a short and unexpected diversion in the extreme south-west corner of Estremadura, caused by the appearance of an outlying French column in that quarter, which had no connexion with Latour-Maubourg. A word as to this is necessary, since its result was to bring a new Spanish force into Beresford's sphere of operations. When Soult returned to Andalusia in the middle of March, his first care was to drive off Ballasteros and the other detachments which had been threatening Seville in his absence. They gave back into the Condado de Niebla, as has already been mentioned. But at the end of the month the situation was complicated by the news that an expedition from Cadiz, the division of Zayas, had landed at Moguer, in the estuary of the Rio Tinto, and seemed about to join Ballasteros. If this junction had been made, the force collected in the west would have been too large to be safely neglected. Wherefore Soult sent out General Maransin and the Prince of Aremberg, the former with seven battalions of Gazan's division, and the latter with two cavalry regiments, to attack the Spaniards. At the approach of this column of 4,500 men Zayas re-embarked, losing 300 men from his rearguard in so doing (April 1). Ballasteros retired into the mountains. Maransin thought it his duty to endeavour to make an end of this active and elusive adversary, whose constant appearances and reappearances on the flank of Seville had

[1] Long says that the 13th took about 150 prisoners (*Vindication*, p. 104), but the French accounts do not acknowledge anything like such loss.

caused so much trouble. Sending back his cavalry and guns, he plunged into the hills with his infantry, and for twelve days hunted Ballasteros up and down the rugged upper valleys of the Odiel and the Rio Tinto. On April 12th Ballasteros, gradually pushed northward, came down to Fregenal, on the borders of Estremadura, where he offered battle, but was beaten, and fled to Xeres de los Caballeros. Maransin pursued, and reached that place on the 14th, while Ballasteros retired to Salvatierra de los Barros, not far from Santa Marta, and close on the flank of Beresford's army. Maransin, who had long been cut off from touch with other French detachments, was wholly unaware that he had run into the neighbourhood of a British force, and would have been captured, or defeated, if he had stayed a day longer at Xeres, for Ballasteros had called for help to Beresford, and the latter was preparing to throw two divisions upon his flank and rear[1]. Letters from Latour-Maubourg to Maransin, to warn him of his danger, were intercepted by the guerrilleros and sent to the British camp[2]. But an *Afrancesado*, one of the principal inhabitants of Xeres, warned the French general just before it was too late: and, hastily leaving his position at night, Maransin retired into Andalusia via Fregenal and Aracena, and ultimately joined Latour-Maubourg by a circuitous route.

Ballasteros stayed behind in Estremadura, and the allied force in that province was strengthened by his 3,500 men. But this was not all: the Regency at Cadiz resolved to place a considerable army in this direction, their own city being more than amply garrisoned, and expeditions to the south being unpopular since the fiasco that followed Barrosa. On April 25th General Blake took the two divisions of Zayas and Lardizabal (both of which had fought at Barrosa), and landed with them at Ayamonte, the port in the mouth of the Guadiana. From thence he moved up along the Portuguese frontier, and joined

[1] D'Urban visited Ballasteros's camp on the 14th and settled with him all the details of a joint march against Maransin (whom they wrongly supposed to be d'Aremberg, not knowing that the latter had returned to Seville with the cavalry). 'If d'Aremberg takes the bait, and follows Ballasteros, he must be lost altogether; even if he halts at Xeres we ought to get hold of him,' writes D'Urban in his diary. But Maransin fled on the morning of the 15th.

[2] D'Urban's diary under the 17th April.

Ballasteros near Xeres de los Caballeros about a fortnight later. Between them they had over 10,000 infantry and about 800 cavalry, but few guns, for Blake found it difficult to horse the batteries that he had brought with him, and left all save six pieces behind, at Ayamonte, to follow when they could procure teams. They had not rejoined him four weeks later, when the battle of Albuera was fought. The presence of Blake was not altogether an unmixed benefit, for he was independent of Castaños, who commanded the '5th Army' or old Estremaduran force, and the two generals were ancient rivals and did not seem likely to co-operate with any cordiality. But if Soult was to make his appearance for the relief of Badajoz, it was as well that the Allies should be as strong as possible on the front by which he must attack.

Before, however, Blake had arrived in Estremadura, the investment of Badajoz had begun. It was directed by Wellington himself, who dropped suddenly into the middle of the campaign on the 20th, when he arrived at Elvas. Having seen Masséna retreat to Salamanca, and break up his army into cantonments, he now considered that it was safe for him to pay the visit to the south which he had always projected. Leaving Sabugal on April 16th, he rode across country by Castello Branco and Niza, and reached Elvas on the fifth night. The next day but one he conducted a reconnaissance of Badajoz, escorted by a brigade newly landed at Lisbon, which he had ordered to join Beresford —Alten's two light battalions of the King's German Legion. The examination of the defences of the fortress was made under some difficulties, for at the moment when Wellington was riding round the walls a large working party of the garrison, which had been dispatched to cut timber in the woods to the south, was returning into the place. Phillipon, the governor, thinking that Wellington's escort was a detachment sent to cut off his workmen, came hastily out of the fortress with three battalions, and swept off the high-road two companies of the Germans who were accompanying the head-quarters' staff, with the loss of fifty or sixty men. The working party hurried to join their friends, and got into the gate before the main body of Alten's brigade could come up. This interruption being over, Wellington completed his survey of the whole circuit of Badajoz, and on the

next day (April 23rd) issued elaborate orders to Beresford, concerning the policy to be observed in Estremadura during the siege. He had never intended to stay more than a few days in the south, to supervise affairs, and on the 25th a dispatch received from Sir Brent Spencer, the senior officer left with the main army in the north, reported such activity of the French in that direction that he rode hard for the frontiers of Leon, where he arrived on the 29th.

The orders dictated to Beresford governed the whole course of the campaign in Estremadura during the next month, and were of the highest importance. Wellington directed that the siege of Badajoz should be begun the moment that the guns and material were ready, but warned his colleague that its commencement would infallibly bring Soult to the relief of the place, with every available man that he could scrape together from Andalusia. It was impossible to calculate what the strength of his army would be: if he raised the siege of Cadiz or evacuated Granada, so that he could bring a very large force with him, Beresford was to retire behind the Guadiana, and assume a defensive position on the Caya river in front of Elvas. If forced from thence, he must retire even as far as Portalegre should it be necessary. But if Soult (as was more likely) came up with a force which was not absolutely overwhelming in numbers, 'Marshal Beresford will consider of and decide upon the chance of success, according to a view of the relative number of both armies, and making a reasonable allowance for the number of Spanish troops which will co-operate with him. . . . If he should think his strength sufficient to fight a general action to save the siege of Badajoz, he will collect his troops to fight it. I believe that, upon the whole, the most central and advantageous place to collect the troops will be at Albuera. . . . All this must of course be left to the decision of Sir William Beresford. I authorize him to fight the action if he should think proper, or to retire if he should not[1].'

The co-operation of the Spaniards was the crucial point. Unless it were assured, Wellington considered that Beresford must assume the more cautious and defensive attitude. If it were secured, the bolder policy might be pursued. The lines which

[1] *Dispatches*, vii. 491–2.

Wellington laid down were in the main those which had already been suggested by Beresford: (1) Castaños must undertake to keep the horse of Villemur in the Sierra Morena, closely observing Latour-Maubourg, but forbid him to engage in any fighting; he must retire if pressed; the infantry of the 5th army must stay at Merida, as at present, but be ready to join Beresford if Soult invaded Estremadura. (2) Ballasteros was to take a similar position on the other flank, with his head quarters at Burguillos (near Zafra)[1] and his advanced posts at Fregenal and Monasterio; if Soult moved forward, he was to join Beresford without attempting to fight. (3) When Blake's army had landed, it was to pass up the Guadiana, and take post at Xeres de los Caballeros; on any alarm from Soult, it was (like the other Spanish troops) to join Beresford at once. If these arrangements worked, at least 15,000 Spaniards would be in line at Albuera, the chosen position, to assist in holding back Soult. And, as we shall see, the scheme did work exactly as Wellington had designed, and the whole force was collected. (4) Lastly, and this was all-important, when the allied forces were concentrated, they must be placed under a single commander, and not worked with divided authority and divided responsibility, as had been the case in the Talavera campaign of 1809. Concerning Blake there could be no difficulty, as he was junior to Castaños, and the latter had consented to place himself at Beresford's disposition when they met at Jerumenha on March 30th. Too much praise cannot be given to his reasonable and conciliatory conduct, which alone rendered possible the co-operation of all the allied forces during the ensuing campaign.

Wellington therefore, as is clear, foresaw the whole course of subsequent operations, and even fixed the exact battle-spot on which the fate of Soult's attempt to relieve Badajoz would be decided. The only point left to Beresford's decision was whether the strength of the French army was such as to render a successful resistance possible. And when we come to consider the respective forces at the disposition of the two parties, it can hardly be urged that Beresford was wrong to accept battle. That his victory was a hard-fought and costly one came

[1] Not to be confused with another Burguillos on the Guadalquivir, north of Seville.

from minor tactical circumstances, which will be explained in their due place.

As to the details of the projected siege of Badajoz, Wellington laid down an equally clear policy. All guns and material were to be collected in Elvas, Campo Mayor, and Olivenza, and not to move till everything was ready. The main communications of the army were to be across a floating bridge to be constructed at the junction of the Caya and the Guadiana, five miles below Badajoz and six from Elvas. The permanent bridge of Merida and the temporary bridges at Jerumenha would be subsidiary resources. Lastly, and here was the most important point, the general scheme to be pursued was that the besiegers should first reduce the outlying defences of Badajoz, Fort San Cristobal on the north bank of the Guadiana, the Pardaleras and the Picurina on the south bank. Only when all these were taken would operations against the city itself be begun. To quote the concluding paragraph of Wellington's memorandum: 'When the British army shall be in possession of San Cristobal, Picurina and Pardaleras, Marshal Beresford will determine upon the point at which he will attack the body of the place. It is believed that, upon the whole, one of the south faces will be the most advantageous.'

There can be no doubt that all the mishaps of the two first British sieges of Badajoz had their origin in these original orders of Wellington, which were drawn up on the advice of his chief engineer, Colonel Fletcher. The great mistake was the choosing of the almost impregnable fort of San Cristobal as one of the three first points of attack, and the making all subsequent operations depend upon its capture. No doubt the possession of this lofty and commanding work would render the fall of Badajoz certain, since it overlooked the castle and all the northern end of the city. But it was the strongest part of the whole defences, and when the miserable and antiquated train of artillery at Beresford's disposition is taken into consideration, and it is remembered that the siege was to be conducted 'against time' as it were, i.e. with the hope that it might be concluded before Soult could collect a relieving force, it is clear that San Cristobal ought to have been left alone. The other points designated by Wellington, the Pardaleras and Picurina,

were much more accessible, and the capture of one or other of them would have brought the besiegers close to the walls, though neither of them commanded the whole city in the same fashion as San Cristobal. The best commentary on the sieges of 1811 is that a year later, at the third and successful leaguer, Wellington left the high-lying fort on the other side of the Guadiana entirely alone. The original orders of 1811 gave three separate and distinct objectives, and none of these were to be mere 'false attacks,' since it is distinctly said that operations against the enceinte were only to begin when all three of the forts were in British hands. Wellington was not a trained engineer; he was dependent on the advice of the officers of that arm, and it seems that they gave him bad counsel, as they certainly did to Beresford during the subsequent weeks. The most puzzling thing is to make out why Colonel Fletcher and his colleagues ignored Soult's precedent; the French engineers had concentrated their attack on the Pardaleras front as their sole objective, for their other operations were false attacks. The English engineers, instead of concentrating their efforts in the same way, wasted their work on three separate points, which was all the more inexcusable because they knew that the resources which their comrades of the artillery arm had at their disposition were most inadequate for a great siege. Hence came a very costly and deplorable series of failures.

On the day of Wellington's departure from Elvas heavy rain fell, and the Guadiana rose high, not merely washing away the cask-bridge at Jerumenha, but rendering the working of the flying bridges impossible. This was a serious matter; not only did it put a temporary stop to the communications between Elvas and the army, but it raised the question as to what might happen if a similar mischance were to occur when Soult was invading Estremadura. For if the Jerumenha bridges should break when the Allies were concentrated at Albuera, they would have no line of retreat and an impassable river behind. Beresford, with this possibility in his eye, ordered an alternative line of communication to be established via Merida, and sent a brigade of the 2nd Division thither to reinforce the Spaniards of Morillo, and a day later the whole 4th Division. His anxiety on this point did not cease till, on the 5th of May, a strong pontoon

bridge had been built at the point selected by Wellington, the place where the Caya falls into the Guadiana. By this time the Jerumenha bridges were again in working order, but it was clear that it would be a mistake to trust the whole safety of the army to them.

It was only on this same day (May 5) that Colonel Fletcher and Major Alexander Dickson reported to Beresford that they were ready to produce the means for the attack on Badajoz: the former had his stock of platforms, fascines, and gabions prepared; the latter had organized the first convoy of artillery and ammunition from Elvas. On the 6th, therefore, the investment of Badajoz on the south side of the Guadiana was completed by the British brigades of Lumley and Alten and the Portuguese brigade of Fonseca, while on the following day the brigade of Kemmis and the 17th Portuguese (part of the garrison of Elvas) appeared opposite San Cristobal, and shut in the place on the northern bank of the river. The rest of the infantry[1] encamped as a support of the besieging force in the woods between Badajoz and Albuera, but the cavalry still remained in southern Estremadura, and Colborne's brigade had been for some days (April 30th–May 11th) executing a demonstration in the Sierra Morena, with the object of keeping Latour-Maubourg employed. This last operation, owing to Colborne's skilful management of his column of 2,000 infantry and two squadrons each of Spanish and Portuguese horse, had been very successful. On hearing of British infantry in his front, the French general evacuated his posts on the crest of the mountains, Guadalcanal, Fuente Ovejuna, Azuaga, and Monasterio, and fell back south-eastward towards Constantina on the Cordova road, abandoning the direct line of retreat on Seville, which he had hitherto covered. Colborne, after clearing all these places, extended his march eastward into a very wild and unexplored country, and summoned the isolated castle of Benalcazar, the only French garrison left north of the Sierra Morena. When it refused to listen to a summons, he had to leave it, having neither guns to batter it nor time to waste. From thence he returned by a circular sweep through

[1] Hoghton's brigade of the 2nd Division, Myers's and Harvey's brigades of the 4th Division, Campbell's brigade of Hamilton's Portuguese division.

Campanario to Almendralejo, where he once more was in touch with the British army (May 11th).

The first episodes of the siege of Badajoz were not very encouraging to the besiegers. On the 8th trenches were opened opposite all the three points of attack designated by Wellington, the Picurina and Pardaleras forts on the south side, and San Cristobal on the north. In each case the first parallel was started at about 400 yards from the walls; Dickson had told off fourteen 24-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers for the work on the left bank, five 24-pounders and two other howitzers for the attack on San Cristobal. More energy was displayed in this last quarter than in the others, apparently from the notion that if this commanding work could be subdued the rest of the siege would be an easy matter. But the results were disappointing: on the stony slopes of San Cristobal there was little earth to throw up, and the spade gritted against rock at three inches from the surface. At the end of the first night's digging the trench was but a seam, and there was only one section at which about ten men could work under cover. The rest had to be abandoned during daylight, for the enemy kept up a furious fire, not merely from the fort, but from the citadel on the other side of the river, whose flank battery enfiladed the projected trench. Three out of nine engineer officers present on this front were killed or wounded in the first twenty-four hours, and many of the workers from Kemmis's brigade and the 17th Portuguese. It soon became obvious that the trenches would have to be built with earth from a distance and gabions, rather than excavated. Nevertheless, a battery for Dickson's five 24-pounders was sketched out, and began to be visible to the enemy. On the night of the 10th Phillipon sent up a reserve battalion into San Cristobal, and executed a sortie upon the British works. It penetrated into the trenches, but was driven out after a sharp struggle by the covering party. But, pursuing too far, the British came under the guns of San Cristobal, and had to retire to their trenches with lamentably heavy loss[1]. Next day the battery was completed, despite of a deadly fire both from the

[1] So D'Urban's diary under May 11th. The loss was over 400 men, of whom 207 were in the 40th, 118 in the 27th, 75 in the 97th, and 38 in the 17th Portuguese. The French lost about 200 men only.

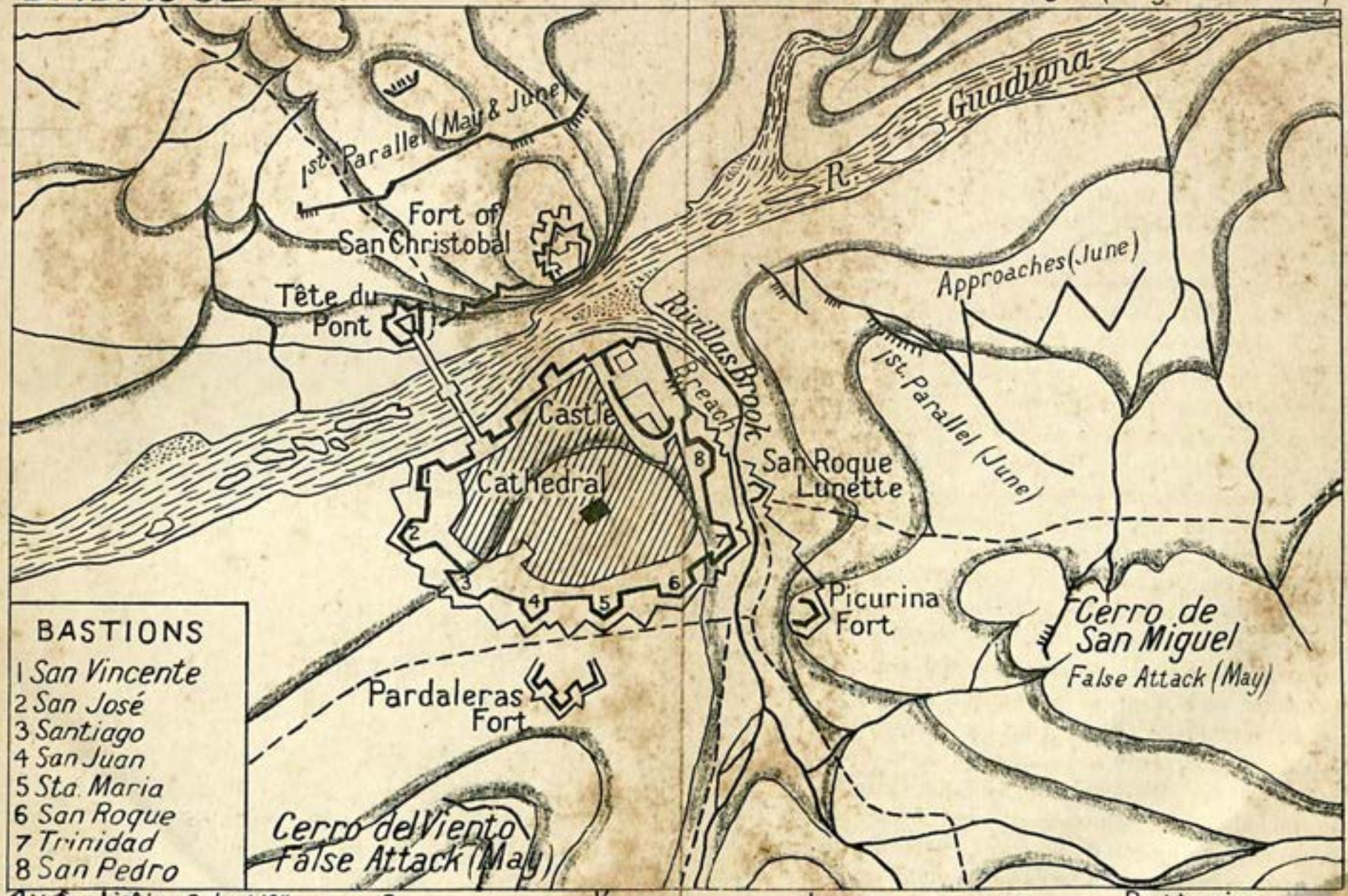
fort and the castle, and opened upon its objective. But it was completely overmastered, and before night four of its five guns had been damaged or dismounted; three more engineer officers were hurt, leaving only three surviving of the original nine. It is said that the battery opened before it had been intended—a fault of over-zeal on the part of the Portuguese major in command. Beresford's purpose had been to wait till the other attacks, on the Picurina and Pardaleras, were ready, before beginning to batter San Cristobal. These attacks had met with less difficulty, the ground being easier to dig, and on the evening of the 11th the trenches in front of the Picurina were well advanced, and the battery of ten guns there opened upon the fort with some, but not great, effect.

Seeing the San Cristobal attack faring so badly, the engineers got leave to erect a second battery on that side, further down the hill, which was intended to check the enfilading fire from the other side of the Guadiana. More guns were brought up to the original battery, to replace those that had been damaged. But both batteries were overpowered and badly maltreated on the morning of the 12th. A few hours later news arrived from the south, sent by Ballasteros, to the effect that the French were in motion from Seville with a large relieving army, and were marching hard across the Sierra Morena, just as Wellington had expected; they had reached Santa Ollala on the 11th, and were already in touch with Latour-Maubourg. Since their force was estimated at only 23,000 men—not far from the real amount—Beresford resolved to fight, and sent requests to Castaños, Ballasteros, and Blake to concentrate on Albuera, the battle-ground selected by Wellington. It was fortunate that Blake was now in close touch and available—he had reached Fregenal on the 9th and Barcarrota on the 12th, so that his arrival was certain, unless some unforeseen accident should occur. Without his aid it would have been doubtful policy to wait for Soult and risk a general action: but with his 10,000 men in line the Allies would have wellnigh 35,000 men available, if every unit came complete to the field.

Meanwhile, pending the confirmation of the news of the French advance, Beresford's engineers asked leave to open another parallel, and 1,400 men had been paraded for the

BADAJOZ

The Two British Sieges (May & June 1811)



purpose of starting it, when complete details as to Soult's progress came to hand. It had been so rapid that the Marshal at once ordered all the siege operations to be discontinued, though the engineers tried to persuade him to risk two days' more work, by the vain promise that they would undertake to produce two practicable breaches in that space of time. Beresford wisely refused to listen to them, and ordered that all the guns and ammunition should be returned at once to Elvas, with such of the siege stores as could be readily moved. But the mass of gabions and fascines had to be burnt, as these would be profitable to the garrison, and would certainly be carried into the town if they were left intact. The troops, English, Portuguese, and Spanish (three battalions of Castaños's infantry had come up from Merida), were ordered to prepare to march for Albuera in successive detachments, the 4th Division and the Spaniards being left to the last in the trenches, to cover the removal of the guns and stores.

Beresford's total casualties in this mismanaged fragment of a siege, from May 6th to May 12th, had been 533 British and 200 Portuguese, or 733 in all, lost in the trenches and in the sortie. It will be seen that the sortie cost far more lives than the actual beleaguering work. All the British loss save seven casualties was in Kemmis's brigade of the 4th Division[1], which lay on the Cristobal side, and suffered both in the trench-building and in the sortie. The Portuguese loss was partly in the 17th Line, which acted with Kemmis, partly among the artillery.

[1] 3/27th, 1/40th, and 97th Foot.

SECTION XXVI: CHAPTER II

FUENTES DE OÑORO: PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS. APRIL 12—MAY 3, 1811

THE Army of Portugal, sullenly retiring far within the frontiers of Spain, had been lost to Wellington's sight on April 8th, when it passed the Agueda and fell back in diverging columns towards various towns of the kingdom of Leon—Salamanca, Toro, and Zamora—where it went into cantonments. Only Drouet with the two divisions of Conroux and Claparéde remained in observation of the Allies, with his head quarters at San Muñoz. The British general was well aware of the dilapidated state in which the enemy had reached his base, and calculated that it would take many weeks for Masséna to get his army into fighting trim again. He considered that he might even hope to gain possession of Almeida before the French would be in a position to attempt its relief, though it could only fall by famine, since there were no heavy guns to form a battering-train for its siege nearer than Oporto, Abrantes, or Lisbon. He had already inspected the place, and saw that it had been put in such a good state of defence by the governor, Brennier, that all external traces of the great explosion of August 1810 had disappeared. That the town within was still a mass of ruins, with nearly every house cut off sheer at the first story, was of no military importance, when the enceinte and the bomb-proofs were in good order.

There was a short moment during which Wellington had some hopes of being able to lay hands on Ciudad Rodrigo as well as Almeida. He had learnt that the Spanish fortress was almost as depleted of food as the Portuguese, and that Masséna's troops had consumed 200,000 rations from its stores when they reached the frontier; he thought that the extra garrison which Junot had thrown into it, before he passed onward, would only serve to exhaust the magazines so much the earlier. Accordingly he not

only requested that active and enterprising partisan Julian Sanchez, to beset the roads between Salamanca and Rodrigo, in order that no provisions might get through, but made preparations to throw some British light troops across the Agueda to co-operate with him, when the approach of a convoy should be reported. With this object he moved up the Light Division and Arentschildt's brigade of cavalry close to the Agueda and within a few miles of Rodrigo. Their head quarters were at Gallegos, their outposts extended from the bridge of Barba del Puerco on the north as far as El Bodon on the south. It was intended that, when Don Julian signalled the approach of the French, the Light Division should make a dash across the fords of the Agueda, and endeavour to intercept the convoy. This plan failed on the 13th of April, owing, as Wellington held, to the slowness of Sir William Erskine[1], who was still in command of the division, though news had just arrived—to the great satisfaction of all the battalions—that its old general, Craufurd, was daily expected at Lisbon on his way to the front.

Rodrigo having been revictualled, Wellington abandoned all hope of molesting it further; to have invested it would have been useless, when he had no siege-train. But Almeida he intended to reduce at his leisure, being of the opinion that it would be starved out before Masséna was in a position to take the field to relieve it. Nothing short of his whole army would suffice for that operation—if that even were enough. And knowing that the troops had just reached Salamanca in a demoralized and discontented condition, without shoes, without train, almost without ammunition, and with the remnant of their cavalry and artillery horses dying off at the rate of several hundreds a day, Wellington doubted if his adversary would be able to come out of his cantonments before the summer was far spent. At any rate, he calculated that he had a good many weeks before him, in which he was not likely to find the Army of Portugal a serious danger. Accordingly he resolved to put

[1] Wellington to Beresford, April 14th: 'Sir William Erskine did not send a detachment across the Agueda in time, as I had desired him, and the consequence is that the French got their convoy into Ciudad Rodrigo yesterday morning. . . . It is useless now to keep anybody on the other side of the Agueda.' *Dispatches*, vii. 467.

his own host into cantonments also, in such a position as to block the road to Almeida, and to give it a well-earned rest while that fortress was being starved out. He had, as we observed in a previous chapter, no intention of assuming the offensive against the French in Leon till he had organized his line of communication with his new base at Coimbra, and established large intermediate dépôts at Lamego, Celorico, and other conveniently placed localities. The army was living from hand to mouth,—all the country about Almeida, Guarda, and Sabugal having been thoroughly devastated,—on convoys which were only struggling up at irregular intervals from the lower Mondego. The horses especially were in very poor order, from want of proper forage. 'The regiments subsisted on the green corn, which was dreadful to the inhabitants, and of little use to the horses, when they had to work. There was nothing else, and we had to cut their rye. . . . How our army has been carried though this desolate abandoned country is astonishing[1].' Till there were dépôts and a regular service established, it was impossible to concentrate the army, much less to send it forward into Spain.

Accordingly the allied troops were spread broadcast in the villages between the Coa and the Agueda. The Light Division and two cavalry regiments[2] were in front, holding the outposts facing Ciudad Rodrigo, and in touch with Drouet's corps, which lay along the Yeltes, a stream that runs roughly parallel with the Agueda, at a distance of from seven to fifteen miles to the north-east. The 5th Division was in the villages around Fort Concepcion, in support of the Light Division. The 6th Division, with Pack's Portuguese, who had lately come up from the Mondego, where they had been dropped during the pursuit of Masséna[3], were blockading Almeida. The main body of the army, the 1st, 3rd, and 7th Divisions, with Ashworth's independent Portuguese brigade[4], were cantoned in the valleys of

[1] Tomkinson's (16th Light Dragoons) *Diary*, April 10th–11th (p. 98).

[2] 14th Light Dragoons and 1st Hussars K.G.L.

[3] See above, p. 199.

[4] Sometimes called Pamplona's brigade in Wellington's dispatches of this date, Colonel Pamplona having been in temporary command during Ashworth's absence.

the Dos Casas and the Turon, tributaries of the Agueda, being distributed between Nava de Aver, Fuentes de Oñoro, Pozo Bello, and other small places in the neighbourhood. The cavalry, save that detached to the front, was trying to keep its horses alive in the poor villages along the Coa, from Castello Rodrigo to Alfayates [1]. The whole army, distributed in a square of not more than twenty miles, was so placed that it could concentrate at any point in one march. Wellington, even though he judged Masséna unable to molest him, was determined not to be caught with his troops in a state of dispersion.

But considering that things were at present at a standstill on the northern frontier, and that nothing serious could be undertaken there, till the line of supplies was organized and Almeida captured, Wellington now resolved to pay the long-deferred visit to Estremadura which he projected as far back as the commencement of Masséna's retreat. 'At this moment,' he wrote to Lord Liverpool, 'the first object is certainly Badajoz.' Till that place should have been recovered and regarrisoned, he could never feel quite safe on his southern flank. A diversion on the part of Soult in the Alemtejo, threatening Lisbon from the south, would always be a dangerous and tiresome possibility, until Badajoz was once more in the hands of the Allies, and all Estremadura recovered and held by a competent force. The future was inscrutable—for all Wellington knew the Emperor might appear in person, before the summer was over, to take up the Spanish problem; or, on the other hand, the affairs of Eastern Europe might cause him to shut off all reinforcements from the Peninsula, and to turn his attention to a Russian war. But whatever might happen, it was well to have the Portuguese frontier properly covered in the south. Supposing the French made another march on Lisbon, it was necessary to be free of danger in the rear. Supposing that they showed weakness, and dropped the offensive, the possession of Badajoz and Estremadura gave facilities for disquieting the Army of Andalusia, perhaps for raising the siege of Cadiz, which could not be secured in any other fashion.

[1] Barbaçena's Portuguese on the lower Coa, below Almeida: the British 1st Royals and 16th Light Dragoons on the upper Coa.

Meanwhile Wellington formulated three possible courses[1] which the French might pursue during the next two months, before new reinforcements could reach them from France, or the Emperor make his appearance—if so he should decide to do. These three possible courses were: (*a*) Masséna might call on Bessières, and induce him to join the Army of Portugal at once with all his disposable troops, in order that they might save Almeida by driving off the British army. (*b*) Masséna might allow his troops a long repose in cantonments, relieving the Army of the North in its present charge of Old Castile, while Bessières, with such part of his corps as he could collect, might invade Galicia, to clear the French right flank. (*c*) Masséna might give his troops the repose that they needed, and, after some interval, might pass south into Estremadura, to join Soult in operations on the Guadiana, while leaving Bessières in charge of the defence of the frontiers of Leon. It will be seen that the French actually adopted first plan (*a*), the endeavour to save Almeida by a junction of the Armies of Portugal and the North, and then, a month later, plan (*c*), a concentration in Estremadura to save Badajoz. Oddly enough, Wellington conceived that the first plan was the least likely of the three, apparently because he over-estimated the time which it would take Masséna to reorganize his army and resume active operations. He did not make enough allowance for the old Marshal's obstinacy, and for the pride which forbade him to allow Almeida to fall without any effort being made to relieve it. But though he thought this scheme the least likely for the French to adopt, he made full provisions for dealing with it, in case it should be the one they selected. His second suggestion, that Bessières might hand over the charge of Old Castile to Masséna, and

[1] The very interesting dispatch in which Wellington's forecast is stated is that to Castaños of April 15, written in French. 'En pensant à ce qu'ils doivent faire dans leurs circonstances actuelles, je trouve que (1) ou ils feront l'invasion de la Galice avec le corps de Bessières, pendant que Masséna donnera du repos à ses troupes, dans les cantonnements occupés jusqu'à présent par Bessières: (2) ou ils se joindront, pour tomber sur mon corps sur la frontière de la Castille—ce qui n'est pas très vraisemblable: (3) ou ils ne feront rien jusqu'à ce que les troupes de Masséna soyent reposées et remises en état, quand ils rassembleront une grande armée dans l'Estrémadure.' *Dispatches*, vii. p. 470.

proceed to invade Galicia, was founded on an insufficient knowledge of the present situation and difficulties of the Army of the North. Bessières, though the gross amount of his forces was large (over 70,000 men), was much too obsessed and worried by the guerrilleros to dream of concentrating a force large enough to make a serious invasion of Galicia. We shall find him, three weeks after the date of Wellington's dispatch, declaring that he could only collect 1,600 cavalry and one battery to form a field force, because any movement of his infantry would imperil the whole fabric of the French supremacy in northern Spain. If the objection be raised that this plea of his was only put forth in order to disoblige Masséna, and to save himself from responsibility, no such objection can be made to his statement of June 6th—made after Masséna's recall—to the effect that if he were forced to concentrate 20,000 men for any purpose, all communications with France and Madrid would be lost, and the whole of the country-side, from the Guadiana to the Bay of Biscay, would blaze up in one general insurrection [1]. Supposing that Masséna and Bessières had been on the best of terms, and that the former had proposed to take over the charge of the region occupied by the latter, in order to set the Army of the North free for field operations, Bessières must have replied that he would not be able to produce enough men to 'contain' the British army, and at the same time to attack Galicia. Wellington's hypothesis therefore was faulty; he undervalued the work of the guerrilleros, who were occupying, for his benefit, the attention of a much greater part of the French army than he supposed. The idea that the enemy might make a blow at Galicia was inspired by his knowledge of the weakness of that province, where Mahy had put everything out of gear, and Santocildes had not yet begun the process of reorganization. Knowing how disastrous the appearance of a French corps in this quarter might prove, he feared it more than was necessary [2].

[1] Bessières to Berthier, from Valladolid, June 6, 1811.

[2] It is possible that there is some diplomatic intention in the stress laid by Wellington on the likelihood of a French invasion of Galicia. He was writing to Castaños, and it was his object to get that general to stir up the Galicians. Hence, perhaps, he exaggerated a possibility which was not so strong as he stated.

If it be asked what were Napoleon's views as to the proper scheme for the French marshals to adopt, under the circumstances that existed on April 15, we must not look (of course) to orders issued about that time, when he was still working on data three weeks old. As late as March 30th he had been sending instructions to Soult and other commanders on the hypothesis that Masséna's head quarters were at Coimbra, and that Oporto was very possibly in French hands![1] On April 9 he was telling the Prince of Essling to devote his energy to the armament of Almeida, and to place himself so as to cover both that place and Ciudad Rodrigo[2]—orders exquisitely inapplicable when Almeida was already blockaded by Wellington, and Masséna's troops had just crawled past Ciudad Rodrigo, in a state of hopeless dilapidation, on their retreat to Salamanca. The next advice sent to the Army of Portugal was almost equally inappropriate: having heard of Wellington's flying visit to Estremadura by intelligence dated April 18th (the trip had begun upon the 15th), he jumped to the conclusion that the English general must have taken many troops with him. On May 7th he wrote, 'the translations from English newspapers herewith enclosed show that Lord Wellington had crossed the Tagus on April 18th. So it seems that on the side of Castile there can now be only half the English army left. The events which must already have taken place on the side of Almeida will have shown the generals that this is the case, and will have enabled them to make the proper corresponding move (*de prendre le parti convenable*), viz. to begin to move towards the Tagus[3].' On the day when this was written, Wellington, who had not taken a man to Estremadura,

[1] Memorandum for Berthier (*Correspondance*, 17,531), dated March 30. 'Le quartier général de l'armée de Portugal reste à Coïmbre. Oporto est occupé par un détachement. . . . Le Prince d'Essling tiendra à Coïmbre, menaçant Lisbonne, qui sera attaquée après la récolte.' At this moment Masséna's army was just reaching the Spanish frontier, in its final retreat from Guarda!

[2] *Correspondance*, 17,591. 'Vous ferez connaître au Prince d'Essling . . . qu'il doit presser l'armament d'Almeida: . . . Il doit prendre des mesures pour couvrir Almeida et Ciudad Rodrigo, et d'un autre côté pour se mettre en communication avec Madrid et Séville.'

[3] *Correspondance*, 17,701.

had been back on the frontier of Leon since April 28, and had, at the head of the whole of his original army, defeated Masséna and Bessières at Fuentes de Oñoro, on May 5th. As always, the imperial orders, founded on data that had long ceased to be correct, or had never been correct at all, arrived too late to direct the course of the campaign.

One most important measure, however, was taken at this time, by which the Emperor did succeed in affecting the general course of affairs on the frontier of Portugal. On April 20th he made up his mind to recall Masséna, and to send a new chief to the Army of Portugal. Five days before, Marshal Marmont, newly returned from commanding in Dalmatia, had received orders to start at once for Spain, where he was to replace Ney at the head of the 6th Corps. Whether the Emperor had already made up his mind on the 15th that Marmont was to replace Masséna, not to serve under him, it is impossible to say. But he at any rate concealed his purpose from the younger Marshal, who had been some days in Spain before he received on May 10th the dispatch of April 20th which made him commander of the Army of Portugal[1]. Probably the news that Masséna had failed in his design to hold Coimbra, which Foy had elaborately explained to the Emperor, and had fallen back behind Ciudad Rodrigo, had provoked his master to dismiss him from command. Foy's report had caused Napoleon to believe that Masséna could stop on the Mondego and hold Wellington in check. The imperial dispatch of March 30 (as we have already seen) speaks of Masséna's stay at Coimbra as a settled fact, and states that Oporto is or will soon be in his hands. On April 9 Napoleon knew that the Marshal had lost Coimbra and fallen back on Guarda[2], but continued to send him elaborate instructions. It was apparently the receipt of Masséna's dispatch of March 31st from Alfayates, confessing that he was completely foiled, and that he must retire beyond the Agueda, as far as Zamora and Toro, since the spirit of the army was so broken that he dared not risk a general

[1] This we learn from Marmont's letter to Berthier dated May 14, in which he says that the dispatch reached him only on May 10, and that its contents were unexpected. (Marmont's *Mémoires*, iv. p. 78.)

[2] *Correspondance*, 17,591.

action [1], which determined the Emperor to supersede him. This document must have reached Paris about the 15th or 16th, and would suffice to explain Napoleon's anger. For a Commander-in-Chief who confesses that he has lost the confidence of his army is a dangerous person to retain in power. There was ample evidence from Masséna's earlier letters that he had quarrelled not only with Ney but with most of his other superior officers; if the general feeling of the army was also against him, he was not likely to get much good service out of it. Possibly there may have been also a feeling of wounded *amour propre* in the Emperor's breast, when he reflected how, relying on Masséna's assurances, he had informed Soult, King Joseph, and Bessières that the Army of Portugal had its head quarters at Coimbra, and would attack Lisbon in the autumn [2], so that 'a hundred thousand men, using Coimbra and Badajoz as their bases, would complete the conquest of Portugal, a conquest which would drag England into a crisis that would be of the highest interest.' Napoleon did not like to be made ridiculous before his subordinates, by having been induced to publish an absurd misstatement of fact, leading up to a vain-glorious prophecy which appeared most unlikely to be realized.

But though Masséna's death-warrant as commander-in-chief was signed on April 20, and may have been decided upon as early as April 16, there were still three weeks during which he was to make his last stroke for revenge, and to lose his last battle, for it was not till May 12th that Marmont presented his *lettres de service* and took over the command.

Wellington, meanwhile, convinced that he had nothing to fear for some little time from the Army of Portugal and its commander, left Villar Formoso on the morning of April 15th, reached Sabugal that night, Castello Branco on the 17th, and Elvas by the noon of the 20th. This was marvellous travelling, considering the mountain roads that had to be traversed, but Wellington was a mighty horseman, and accompanied by only

[1] 'Le désir que l'armée a manifesté depuis longtemps d'aller se reposer ne me laisse aucun doute qu'il serait dangereux d'attendre l'ennemi pour recevoir bataille ou pour la lui donner.'

[2] All this, of course, is from the Great Memorandum of March 30, which Berthier was to communicate to all the chiefs of the Peninsular armies.

a few well-mounted staff officers flew like the wind over hill and dale. He remained only four days in Estremadura; during that short time he surveyed Badajoz, and issued compendious directions for the siege [1]; he drew up a plan of campaign for the united armies of Beresford, Blake, and Castaños, and then, returning as rapidly as he had come, retraced his route to the frontiers of Leon, and was back at Alameda on the 29th, having been less than a fortnight absent from his army. This rapidity of movement, as we have already seen, completely puzzled Napoleon, who, on receiving the intelligence that Wellington was over the Tagus on the 18th, thought that he had gone with a strong force to establish himself in Estremadura, and sent orders for the Army of Portugal to move at once towards the south [2], a movement which at that moment could not have been executed for want of train, transport, and provisions.

During Wellington's absence the command of the troops cantoned between the Agueda and the Coa had been given over to Sir Brent Spencer, as the senior division-commander present. Wellington did not think it probable that Spencer would be much troubled by the enemy during his short spell of responsibility, but left him directions that covered every possible contingency. If, contrary to all expectation, Masséna should make an effort to relieve Almeida within the fortnight for which the Commander-in-Chief intended to be absent [3], Spencer was directed to make a careful estimate of the force of the enemy; if it were but small the line of the Agueda might be held; if it were great—it was conceivable that Bessières might succour Masséna—Spencer was to concentrate, not in front of Almeida, nor across the road from Rodrigo to that place, but in a defensive position to the south of it, parallel to the French line of advance and threatening it in flank. Only Pack's Portuguese infantry brigade, and Barbaçena's cavalry brigade of the same

[1] For all this see section xxvi. pp. 279-81, on Beresford's campaign in Estremadura.

[2] See above, p. 294.

[3] That he did not purpose to be longer away is shown by the fact that he was already at Portalegre, on his return journey from Elvas, when Spencer's final warning that Masséna was on the move reached him. *Dispatches*, vii. 50.

nation, were to keep up the investment of Almeida till the last possible moment. The designated position was that in front of Rendo, Alfayates, and Aldea Velha, which Wellington took up himself later in the same year, during a subsequent movement of the French to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo. No leave to fight a battle was given to Spencer, though it was given to Beresford when the latter was placed in a similar responsible position. Instead, he was ordered to send constant information to his absent chief, who gave him a tabular statement of the mileage of his journey and the place at which he was to be heard of each day[1]. Wellington intended to return with his own peculiar swiftness on the first threatening news, and thought that he could reckon on being back in time, if he was properly advised of the first ominous movements of the enemy. He apparently calculated that, if Masséna came on in great force, and found the British army massed in a strong mountain position, upon the flank of the route that he must take towards Almeida, he would be unlikely to attack it—Bussaco being an unpleasant memory. If the Marshal began to manœuvre he would lose time, and he himself would be back before the crisis came.

As a matter of fact it was only towards the end of Spencer's short period of responsibility that matters began to grow interesting upon the frontiers of Leon. There was, however, a slight alarm on the 15th–16th, just after Wellington's departure. Masséna, not contented with having passed a first convoy into Rodrigo on the 13th, had followed it up with a second, which was escorted by Marchand's division of the 6th Corps—a unit which had seen more severe service during March than any other part of the French army, yet was considered to be in better order than its fellows. The same phenomenon, it will be remembered, had been noted with Paget's rearguard division during Moore's retreat to Corunna. Marchand was ordered, when he should have lodged the convoy in Rodrigo, to make a reconnaissance toward the Azava, and try to discover what was the force of the British in that direction. He got into the fortress without hindrance, owing to Erskine's usual talent for bungling—on the approach of the convoy the Light

[1] See the three dispatches to Spencer on pp. 464-6, 473-4, and 475 of *Dispatches*, vii, dated respectively April 14, April 16, and April 17, 1811.

Division was concentrated at Molino de Flores, but Erskine refused to send it over the fords, and watched Marchand defile into the town. Some cavalry went across the Agueda, and cut off a flanking party of three hundred French, who took shelter in a ruined village and refused to surrender. Erskine sent no one to support the British horse, and presently a French column came out of Rodrigo and released the blockaded party. All this took place under the eyes of the disgusted Light Division on the other side of the water[1] (April 16th).

Some days later Marchand came out of Rodrigo with a regiment of infantry and a squadron, to make the reconnaissance which he had been directed to execute. At Marialva, five miles outside the fortress, he ran into the pickets of the 95th and 52nd, and received such a warm reception that he turned back at once, and sent the report to Masséna that the British were established in strong force close above the Agueda (April 22[2]). After this there were no further alarms at the front till the 28th, the day on which Wellington returned from Elvas. But Spencer's account of the reconnaissance of the 22nd, which reached Wellington at Portalegre on the 25th, undoubtedly contributed to hurry the return journey of the Commander-in-Chief, for it was accompanied by a report—which was perfectly correct—that information from the side of Salamanca seemed to make it certain that Masséna was reconcentrating his troops for a dash at Almeida, and that Bessières had been asked to give help. The Salamanca secret correspondents (of whom the chief was Doctor Curtis, the head of the Irish College in the University) had always proved trustworthy, so that their reports could not be ignored, and Wellington was glad that the French movement was reported at the end, and not at the commencement, of his trip to Estremadura.

The fact was that Masséna was making a last desperate effort to save the military reputation of which he was so proud, and to justify himself to his master. If Almeida and Rodrigo were both to be lost, as the final sequel to his retreat from Portugal,

[1] For details see the *Journal* of George Simmons of the 95th (*A British Rifleman*), pp. 164–5.

[2] Wrongly dated April 20 by Sprünglin in his generally accurate diary (p. 477).

his whole year's command must be written down as a failure; if these early conquests of 1810 could be saved, he might yet claim to have added somewhat to the French dominions in the Peninsula. His troops had not been a fortnight in their cantonments before he was making preparations to reassemble them for a last effort. In some respects that fortnight had made a great difference in their condition: Salamanca and Valladolid, at the moment of his arrival, were full of drafts of men, and accumulation of stores, belonging to the Army of Portugal, which had been gathering there for many months while the communications with that army were cut. At one moment in the late winter, Thiébault, the governor of Salamanca, had no less than 18,000 men of detachments belonging to Masséna's troops in his government[1] — partly convalescents, partly small parties which had come up from the French dépôts to join their regiments, and had been unable to do so. Though some of them had ultimately gone forward with Foy and Gardanne, many still remained to be absorbed. The numbers of 'present under arms' in the 2nd, 6th, and 8th Corps went up at once, the mass of sick and exhausted men which they discharged into hospital being replaced by the drafts and convalescents. Masséna also took out of the 9th Corps the battalions belonging to regiments of which the main bodies were already in the old Army of Portugal, and sent them to join their comrades[2]. The *cadres* of one battalion in each regiment were then sent home to France, and the other three raised to something like their original war strength. This redistribution brought up the divisions of Reynier and Loison to a figure which they had not known for many months, though it depleted Drouet's corps to a corresponding extent: his troops now consisted of only

[1] Thiébault's *Mémoires*, vol. iv. p. 448.

[2] The 6th Corps incorporated one battalion each of the 6th Léger, 25th Léger, and the 27th Ligne from Conroux's division, and one each of the 39th, 59th, 69th, 76th from Claparède's. The 2nd Corps got a battalion of the 17th Léger only, besides drafts. Solignac's division, nominally 6,110 bayonets, was short of two battalions (from the 15th and 65th), or 850 men, left in garrison at Ciudad Rodrigo. In the same garrison had been left the whole Régiment de Prusse (500 men), besides drafts. The junction of the isolated battalions from Drouet's corps took place on April 27. (Fririon, p. 198.)

eighteen battalions, or 10,000 infantry, all consisting of fourth battalions belonging to regiments serving in Andalusia. He had received orders that when the crisis on the frontiers of Leon was over, he was to conduct these units to join their eagles in Soult's army. Drouet was anxious to get away from Masséna as soon as possible, and would gladly have marched for Seville without delay; but it was obvious that this was as yet impossible, and, as he was technically under the command of the Marshal, he was compelled to play his part in the ensuing campaign.

The net result of all the transferences of battalions and the picking up of drafts was that on May 1, the 2nd Corps had in the ranks 1,200 more men than it had possessed on March 15, the 6th Corps 2,000 more, Solignac's division of the 8th Corps 800 more. On the other hand, Clausel's division of the last-named corps, originally composed almost entirely of isolated 'fourth battalions' was practically ruined[1]. Masséna left it behind, when he mobilized the other divisions of the old Army of Portugal for the May campaign. But the men available for the field in the remaining divisions, including those of Drouet, now amounted to 42,000 bayonets. Their ammunition had been replenished, they had been reshod, though only to a small extent reclothed, and they had received at the last moment several months' arrears of pay. Their morale still left much to be desired, for confidence in their Commander-in-Chief had not been restored, and Ney was still regretted. But a French army, however discontented, could always be trusted to fight when duty called, and the Prince of Essling still hoped to redeem his lost reputation.

But the weak points in the Army of Portugal were the cavalry and artillery. The greater part of the horses which had survived the retreat from Santarem had only reached the plains of Leon to die. A third of the troopers lacked horses altogether, the remainder had in many cases mounts which must perish if asked to do another week's work. When the cavalry brigadiers of the 2nd and 6th Corps were directed to send to the front all mounted men fit for service, Lamotte could only show 319

[1] It had sunk on May 1 from an original strength of 6,800 men to 3,073.

sabres from a brigade which had counted 800 in March; Pierre Soult (decidedly more fortunate) had 600 out of 900, though one of his regiments (the 1st Hussars) could put only 103 men in the saddle. Montbrun's division of reserve dragoons, which had 2,400 sabres a few weeks back, came to the front with 1,187. The most effective cavalry unit in the army was the brigade of Fournier[1], belonging to Drouet's corps, which, not having shared in the winter campaign in Portugal, could show 794 men in good state. Thus Masséna could bring forward for the new campaign no more than 3,000 horsemen, and these not in the condition[2].

With the artillery the case was even worse, for the class of horse had been weaker, and the mortality proportionately greater. As we have seen in a previous chapter, the batteries had for the most part just succeeded in dragging back their guns to the Agueda, after destroying nearly all their carts and caissons. It was doubtful whether for an offensive campaign the whole army could now provide twenty guns with the full complement of auxiliary vehicles, adequately horsed. Masséna, in stating his difficulties to Berthier, went so far as to say that each of the four corps could put about half a battery into the field in proper order[3]. The state of the military train was quite as bad—regimental and corps transport was reduced to such a state of nullity, that when the army took the field it would have to be for a few days at most, since, after loading the men with as many rations as each could carry, the only extra supply was what could be drawn by a few store carts found in Rodrigo and Salamanca. During the short campaign that was imminent, the troops lived from hand to mouth, on food daily brought up from the magazines of Rodrigo, after having been compelled to eat the convoy

[1] For strange doings of this eccentric brigadier at Salamanca during the winter, see Thiébault, vol. iv. pp. 435-7.

[2] These figures, differing much from those supplied by Koch, are worked out from the return of May 1 in the Paris Archives Nationales. The total of cavalry mounted and available seems to have been 3,007, including Fournier. See tables in Appendix XIX.

[3] Masséna to Berthier, April 30, 1811, from Ciudad Rodrigo. The returns show that on May 1 twelve batteries had been left behind with no horses at all, in order that the five remaining might take the field with 425 horses.

that they had brought with them for the supply of Almeida. There was nothing to be got from the country-side, which was exhausted, by the constant passing to and fro of armies and detachments, all the way from Salamanca to the frontier.

Food at the base existed; when Masséna reached Salamanca he had found there considerable accumulations, though not nearly so much as he expected or required[1]. It was on this particular point that he had started a lively dispute with Bessières the moment that he reached Spain. The Duke of Istria had been for some months in charge of the whole of Old Castile and Leon, and had come to look upon their resources as so much his own private property that he greatly resented the intrusion of 40,000 starving men into his governorship. Masséna complained that he was fed with promises, and that when statistics of food placed at his disposal were compared with what was actually handed over, there was a lamentable discrepancy. He had been told that he would find at Salamanca 10,000 *fanegas* of wheat, and that 8,000 more and 200,000 rations of biscuit for the garrison of Rodrigo would appear in a few days; he stated that he could only discover 6,000 *fanegas* and 39,000 rations of biscuit, and that the convoy sent to Rodrigo on the 13th had only carried 20,000 rations at most. Bessières replied that he was doing his best, that he had his own corps to feed, that the arrival of the Army of Portugal was wholly unexpected —had he not been told only a few weeks back, first that it was to stay at Coimbra, and then that it was going off by a cross march to Plasencia and the Tagus? For so Masséna had written from Guarda at the end of March. Moreover, Old Castile was dreadfully exhausted, and the guerrilleros so active that every convoy required an immense escort to guard it. All this was perfectly true, yet it is probable that he might have done more if he had chosen, and he presently received virulent rebukes from the Emperor for lack of zeal.

But when recriminatory letters were already passing between the two marshals on the food question, Bessières began to receive additional demands for military help. On April 20th Masséna wrote that he was bound in honour to march to the relief of Almeida, that he would have his infantry reorganized by the

[1] Masséna to Berthier, April 17th, from Salamanca.

26th, but that his cavalry and artillery were in such a hopeless state that he was forced to make a formal request for aid to the Army of the North. The Duke of Istria replied that his troops were so scattered, and the guerrilleros so active, that he doubted if he could give any help at all. On the 22nd, however, he wrote that by making a great effort he could collect some cavalry and guns, and would be at Salamanca on the 26th. But on the 27th nothing had arrived from the Army of the North at that city. Masséna replied in high wrath: 'Vos lettres sont inconcevables. Je vous ai demandé de l'artillerie et des attelages, et encore plus positivement de la cavalerie — vous avez sous différents prétextes éludé ma demande. Toutes les troupes qui sont en Espagne sont de la même famille. Vous êtes, jusqu'à ce qu'il y ait de nouveaux ordres, chargé de la défense et de l'approvisionnement des places de Rodrigo et d'Almeida,' &c.

Bessières, however, did not break his promise, as Masséna had for a moment feared, he merely executed it a little late, and on the smallest possible scale. He brought with him two small brigades of cavalry, making between 1,600 and 1,700 sabres, that of Wathier (11th, 12th, 24th *Chasseurs à cheval*, and 5th Hussars), and that of Lepic, which consisted of two squadrons each of the grenadiers, lancers, and chasseurs of the Imperial Guard. He had also a horse artillery battery of the Guard, and had brought thirty teams of gun-horses, which, when distributed to the Army of Portugal, enabled it to put thirty-two pieces and the corresponding caissons in the field. Masséna had asked for Bessières's cavalry and guns, but had not been at all anxious to see his colleague in person appearing. 'He would have done better,' said the Prince to his staff, 'to have sent me a few thousand men more, and more food and ammunition, and to have stopped at his own head quarters, instead of coming here to examine and criticize all my movements[1].' He got a cool reception, which did not prevent him from following Masséna about during the whole campaign, volunteering frequent advice, and expressing a polite curiosity at his colleague's smallest actions. Apparently he wanted to have credit for being present at a victory—if one

[1] So Marbot, ii. 457. If Marbot's talents as a *raconteur* make his authority doubtful, we may point out that Thiébault, the governor of Salamanca, tells much the same story in his *Mémoires*, iv. p. 478.

should occur—but was anxious to risk as few of his own troops as possible, and not to take any responsibility. The Emperor, three weeks later, wrote him a letter of bitter rebuke, saying that he could well have brought up 10,000 men without disgarnishing any important posts; an infantry division of the Guard and four batteries might have been added to the 1,700 horse that he actually produced, without leaving Valladolid, Burgos, or the frontier opposite Galicia in any danger [1]. If the two marshals had collected some 55,000 men, it is certain that Wellington would not have fought, and would have allowed Almeida to be revictualled.

Masséna had reached Ciudad Rodrigo on April 26th, his four corps concentrated there by the 29th, and Bessières came up with his cavalry on the 1st of May. The whole force assembled consisted of 42,000 infantry, 4,500 cavalry, and 38 guns, a total, counting the auxiliary arms, of about 48,000 men [2]. On the 30th Marchand was sent out with six squadrons and his own infantry to make a reconnaissance in force of the allied lines. He found the Light Division still in position at Gallegos, with outposts along the Azava, and withdrew to Rodrigo after having stayed for some hours opposite the height of Marialva. On the next day but one (May 2) the French army began to pour in an interminable stream across the Agueda, by the bridge of Ciudad Rodrigo, dividing into two columns when it had passed —the 2nd Corps on the Marialva road, more to the north, the 8th and 9th Corps on the Carpio road, more to the south. The 6th Corps, forming the reserve and crossing late, also took the left-hand Carpio road. Each column was preceded by its corps-cavalry.

Wellington was perfectly well prepared to meet the movement. He had been back with his army since the 29th of April, and had been informed on his arrival that Masséna had

[1] Berthier to Bessières, May 19, 1811.

[2] Infantry, 2nd Corps, 10,292; 6th Corps, 16,816; 8th Corps (1 division), 4,714; 9th Corps, 10,304; total, 42,126. Cavalry. Masséna's own, 3,007; Bessières, 1,665; Artillery, Sappers, Train, &c., 1,400; total, 48,198. Masséna would only acknowledge 35,000 men, and put Wellington's force (which was, as we shall see, 37,000 men) at about 50,000. If Wellington had possessed 50,000 men, Fuentes de Oñoro would have been a very different sort of battle.

come to Ciudad Rodrigo in person two days before, and that the roads from Salamanca westward were black with French columns [1]. He had made up his mind to fight, though he had denied Spencer the power to do so in his absence. The battle position was already chosen, and the army was concentrated upon it, all save the covering screen formed by the Light Division and the cavalry, which was to hold its ground as long as possible before falling back on the main body. The two cavalry regiments which had been sent to the rear in the middle of the month had been brought up again to the Azava on the 28th, so that the whole of the small force of that arm was available for holding back the French advance.

Wellington had less troops in line than he desired, mainly owing to the dreadful depletion in the ranks of the Portuguese infantry, caused by the inefficient way in which it was fed by its government, and the slowness with which convalescents and detached parties rejoined their colours [2]. Some of the regiments which ought to have shown 1,200 men in the ranks had only 500 or 700 men, and the twenty-five battalions with the field army amounted in all to no more than 11,000 bayonets on May 1st, though they had shown 13,000 in the preceding December, and had absorbed many drafts since that date. The single Portuguese cavalry brigade with the army was in even worse state, the two regiments showing but 312 sabres in line, though they had mustered nearly 800 during the winter. The men were alive, but the chargers had disappeared, owing (as

[1] Masséna's arrival was known, through deserters, the day after it occurred. Diary of Simmonds of the 95th, p. 166.

[2] Complaints on this score fill up great parts of Wellington's letters of the 30th April and 1st May (*Dispatches*, vii. 511–12, 516–17). They seem slightly to overstate the deficiency, compared with morning states of May 1; but this comes from his persistent habit of counting only rank and file, omitting officers and sergeants. When he says that the total infantry (including Pack) was only 11,000, while it works out to over 12,000 when that detached brigade is counted, we must remember that he is not reckoning anything but rank and file. Wellington attributes most of the loss to (1) slackness at the *depôsitos* (dépôts) in forwarding drafts, (2) maladministration of the hospitals, (3) insufficient food at the front for those brigades still fed by the Portuguese government, and not taken on to the British establishment.

Wellington maintained) to bad horse-mastership on the part of the men and slack supervision on the part of the regimental officers. As the four British cavalry corps, which had seen the same service during the last two months, were only 200 horses weaker in May than they were in March, the explanation is probably correct.

The total force available for a general action on May 1st was 34,000 infantry, of which 23,000 were British, 1,850 cavalry, including the 312 Portuguese, and 1,250 artillery, sappers, &c. There were four British and four Portuguese batteries, with 48 guns. This total does not include the detachment blockading Almeida, which consisted of Pack's brigade and one British battalion. While only 8,000 weaker than Masséna in infantry, it will be seen that Wellington's army had hardly more than a third of the number of his cavalry—1,850 to 4,500; in guns there was a slight superiority—48 pieces to 38. In a mountain position, such as that of Bussaco, the deficiency of cavalry would have been of no importance. But the country-side between Almeida and Rodrigo is mostly undulating plateau, practicable in most parts for cavalry operations on a large scale. The only obstacles of importance are the courses of the three small streams which cross the high-road, the Azava, Dos Casas, and Turon, minor tributaries of the Agueda. All three are insignificant brooks save after heavy rain, and though there had been a downfall in the end of April, they were now going down and resuming their usual proportions. Their waters were now a negligible quantity, but in some parts of their course they flow in deep-cut ravines, many feet below the general level of the plateau, and present a serious hindrance to the movement of troops. This is especially the case in their lower course; nearer the hills to the south, where they rise, the ravines as well as the streams grow smaller, and can be crossed anywhere.

The particular position which Wellington had selected as his fighting-ground was the line of the Dos Casas, from the ruined Fort Concepcion to the village of Fuentes de Oñoro. The ravine of the Dos Casas is both wide and steep in the neighbourhood of the fort—perhaps 150 feet deep—but grows decidedly shallower towards Fuentes, and above that place is no longer a notable feature in the country-side. The stream itself is nowhere more

than ten yards broad nor three feet deep, so that, when its banks cease to be high and scarped, it can be crossed anywhere by infantry, cavalry, or guns. Its valley above Fuentes is partly arable, partly meadow-land in gentle grassy slopes, much more like an English than a typical Spanish landscape. Standing on the higher ground behind the village, the observer sees a marked contrast between the rocky ravine down-stream, and the broad undulating bottom to his right. The ridge, however, on which he is standing does not entirely disappear to the south; it still remains as the watershed between the little basin of the Dos Casas and that of its twin-stream the Turon, which flows exactly parallel with it less than two miles to the west. Up-stream the view is closed by woods surrounding the village of Pozo Bello (or Posovelho as the neighbouring Portuguese call it) on the right or further bank of the Dos Casas, and by the rounded hill of Nava de Aver, below which the river is flanked on both sides by a stretch of boggy ground, only to be crossed by some invisible paths. There are five miles from Fort Concepcion to Fuentes de Oñoro village, and this was Wellington's original position, entirely covered in front by a well-marked ravine. But the two further miles from Fuentes to Pozo Bello, which he proceeded to take in for defence when the enemy showed signs of turning his right, may be described as open ground, with no protection on its flank save the morass by Nava de Aver, which could obviously be turned by any enemy who chose to make a sufficiently wide circuit, and might be crossed by infantry at some points, after careful exploration of its depths.

Fuentes de Oñoro itself stands on the western bank of the Dos Casas, at the point where the heights begin to sink and the ravine ceases. Its lower houses are almost level with the stream, but the village slopes uphill to two points a little higher than the general summit of the plateau, one of which is crowned by its church, the other by a cross on a large rock. On the opposite side of the stream there are no buildings but a chapel and a single farm-steading. Past these the high-road from Ciudad Rodrigo ascends on a gentle slope, commanded for some hundred yards by the heights on which the village stands, so that any force advancing to attack Fuentes comes under fire early, and has no cover whatever. The eligibility of the place

as a post is much increased by the fact that the houses are surrounded by numerous stone walls, making crofts and gardens, which are of a height and strength suitable for giving excellent cover to infantry in skirmishing order. Nor can it easily be turned, since to the left it is protected by the ravine of the Dos Casas, ever growing deeper down-stream, while on the right the houses trend back for a long distance up the slopes, and the stone walls continue their line for some distance. In short, it is an admirable point on which to rest the flank of an army in battle order, and Wellington had well marked its strength, and was serene and content, so long as the French ranged their forces parallel to his own. The trouble only came when, on the second day of battle, they extended their southern wing to Pozo Bello, so that Fuentes became the right centre instead of the right flank-guard of the allied army.

The general position behind the Dos Casas has only one serious defect: it has in its rear, at a distance of some six or seven miles, the ravine of the Coa, passable at only a limited number of points for artillery and wheeled vehicles, though there are many more at which infantry or cavalry can get across. Of bridges within a reasonable distance from the position there are only those of (1) Ponte Sequeiro, ten miles to the right rear; (2) of Castello Bom, six miles to the direct rear of Fuentes village; and (3) of Almeida, eight miles to the left rear [1]. If the army should be constrained by any misfortune to retreat, its transport and artillery would have to pass over one or more of these three defiles, of which the first is inconveniently placed because it is too far off to the flank, while the third had been broken by the French and only hastily repaired. It may be added also that it was dangerously close to Almeida, though out of sight of that fortress, and completely beyond the range of its cannon. But to have sent baggage or guns across it might have appeared a little hazardous. The only really convenient line of retreat from the Fuentes position was that across the bridge of Castello Bom, a structure of no great breadth, and liable to become congested or blocked in a moment of hurry. It was only wheeled traffic, however, that might become difficult; above

[1] Not to speak of the bridge of Sabugal, six miles above the Ponte Sequeiro and hopelessly out on the flank.

and below the Castello Bom bridge are good fords for infantry and cavalry at San Miguel and Algeirenos, besides numerous other points where troops could get across at a pinch. Evidently, however, if Wellington failed to hold his chosen position, he ran the risk of losing some or all of his *impedimenta*, supposing that he were vigorously pursued and compelled to retreat in haste. A caisson overturned on the descent towards the bridge might force him to abandon whole batteries, jammed in the narrow road. Of this danger he was well aware, but judged it worth risking, in view of the importance of holding the best possible position for covering the siege of Almeida. No battle-ground that was ever chosen is destitute of some fault. And, at the worst, the infantry and cavalry would not be endangered, since the fords could not fail them, and the Coa (though its ravine is often steep) is by no means a large river. But Wellington did not believe that he could be beaten by the force which Masséna was able to bring against him, and though he thought over orders for a retreat, was strongly under the impression that he would never have to issue them.

On May 2nd, as we have already mentioned, the whole French army advanced from Ciudad Rodrigo, one column on the Marialva–Gallegos road, the other on the southern or Carpio road. The Light Division, and the four cavalry regiments accompanying it, began to retire, according to their directions, not making more haste than was necessary, and turning to bay occasionally to fight a small rearguard action. The country-side was somewhat dangerous for a small 'detaining force,' being passable for cavalry in many directions and thickly wooded. It had to be remembered that the enemy, using the cover of the woods, and hiding himself behind the undulations of the ground, might easily break through the screen of cavalry and light troops unless great care and caution were shown. Fortunately the Light Division was well skilled in keeping touch along the line, and in avoiding risks, and a whole day of skirmishing in retreat led to no regrettable incidents. On the night of the 2nd of May the covering force bivouacked behind Gallegos and Espeja, both of which villages were occupied by the advanced guards of the enemy.

On the 3rd Masséna resumed his advance, and drove in the

Light Division and the cavalry upon Wellington's chosen position. They retired skirmishing, till they came to the main body, when the four cavalry regiments wheeled into line on the right rear of the village of Fuentes de Oñoro, while the Light Division, crossing the bridge at that place, placed itself in reserve on the heights, behind the front crest. In the afternoon the whole French army became more or less visible from the Allies' position. It was now in three columns: the right column was formed by the 2nd Corps, which had taken the route Gallegos–Alameda, and displayed itself on the heights opposite Wellington's left, facing towards Fort Concepcion and San Pedro, with the deepest part of the ravine of the Dos Casas in front of it. The centre column was formed by the single division of the 8th Corps (Solignac), which posted itself to the left of the 2nd, south of Alameda. The heaviest and most important mass of the enemy, however, was on the left, where Montbrun's cavalry, which had been engaged all the morning in pushing back the British horse, came up directly opposite Fuentes de Oñoro, and on finding that village occupied in force by the Allies took ground to its left, facing the squadrons which it had been pursuing, on the other side of the Dos Casas. When the cavalry had wheeled aside, the front of the infantry of the 6th Corps became visible on the high-road, division behind division. The 9th Corps, still out of sight in the rear, was behind the 6th, so that five of the eight infantry divisions forming Masséna's army were concentrated opposite Fuentes de Oñoro. The front of the French did not extend for more than a short distance south of that village, so that it looked as if Wellington was to be assailed precisely in the strong position that he had selected.

The allied army had been arrayed at leisure on the ground chosen by its chief, who had ample time to make all his dispositions while the covering force was being driven in. His line was formed as follows: the 5th Division (Erskine) was posted just to the south of Fort Concepcion, with Barbaçena's handful of Portuguese cavalry (only 300 sabres) watching its flank. Next to the south of Erskine lay the 6th Division (Campbell), in front of San Pedro. These two units faced Reynier and Junot respectively, with the deep ravine protecting their front. The 1st, 3rd, and 7th Divisions and Ashworth's Portu-

guese brigade were arrayed on the heights behind Fuentes de Oñoro, and the Light Division had taken post in their reserve. The houses and crofts of the village were occupied by a strong force of picked troops, composed of the light companies of Nightingale's, Howard's, and Löwe's brigades of the 1st Division, and of Mackinnon's, Colville's, and Power's (Portuguese) brigades of the 3rd Division—28 companies in all[1]—with the 2/83rd from Colville's brigade in support. The senior officer in the village was Lieut.-Colonel Williams, of the 5/60th. He had under him about 1,800 men of the light companies, all chosen shots, besides the 460 of the 2/83rd. To the south and rear of Fuentes, some way behind the village, were the four British cavalry regiments, only 1,500 sabres in gross, and reduced to a somewhat lower figure by detachments[2]. It will thus be seen that Wellington, like Masséna, had strengthened his southern wing. He had four and a half divisions of infantry—24,000 men—facing the 6th and 9th Corps, with their 27,000 bayonets and 3,500 horse, in and about Fuentes, while the 2nd Corps was observed by Erskine's 5,000 men, and the 8th Corps by Campbell with a similar number[3]. In the northern end of the field the immense strength of the position behind the ravine enabled Wellington to be economical of troops; if it should chance that the French made a serious attack in that direction, there were ample reserves to be spared from the mass of infantry behind the right wing.

Masséna, having surveyed Wellington's position in the early afternoon, recognized without difficulty that the village of Fuentes was the key of the whole, and that the northern front was too formidable, from the nature of the ground, to be lightly meddled with. It was impossible to make out the disposition

[1] viz. the light companies of 17 British and 4 Portuguese battalions, plus 4 companies of the 5/60th, 1 of the 3/95th, and 2 extra light companies of the K.G.L. attached to Löwe's brigade.

[2] Both Napier (iii. p. 150) and Tomkinson (p. 100) say that the British cavalry, nominally 1,520 sabres, had only about 1,000 in line that day, owing to details, orderlies, &c., absent from the ranks. This is probably an over-great deduction.

[3] See tables at end, Appendix IX. 1st Division, 7,565 men; 3rd Division, 5,480 men; 7th Division, 4,600 men; Light Division, 3,815 men; Ashworth's Portuguese, 2,539 men, or 23,999.

of the allied troops, for (in accordance with his usual practice) their general had placed his battle-line behind the crest, so that nothing could be made out save the skirmishers all along the heights, and the garrison of Fuentes itself, which was sufficiently visible on the slope. In a manner which somewhat suggests his old method of Bussaco[1], Masséna ordered the leading division of the 6th Corps, Ferey's ten battalions, to storm the village by direct frontal attack, while Reynier made a mere demonstration against the 5th Division on the extreme northern end of the position. The latter movement led to nothing, save that, when it seemed threatening, Wellington sent off the Light Division to strengthen his right wing—but, since the 2nd Corps never closed, it was not needed there, and halted behind the crest till nightfall.

In Fuentes village, however, there was a sharp conflict: the first brigade of Ferey's division charged across the easily fordable brook under heavy fire, and got possession of some of the houses on the lower slope. From these the French were dislodged by the charge of the reserves of which Colonel Williams could dispose. The second brigade was then thrown into action by Ferey, and, coming on to the British while they were in the disorder caused by a charge among houses and walls, beat them back, and pursued them up to the top of the village. Here the light companies rallied, by the church and among the rocks, but the enemy remained for a moment master of all that part of Fuentes which lies on the slope and in the bottom by the brook. Wellington was determined that the French should make no lodgement in his line, and late in the afternoon sent three fresh battalions of the 1st Division to clear the village. Cadogan with the 1/71st, supported by the 1/79th and 2/24th, made a determined advance through the tangle of houses, lanes, and walls, and at considerable cost drove Ferey's men right over the brook and up their own slope. Masséna then ordered the defeated troops to be supported by four battalions from Mar-

[1] The statement made by several French authors that Masséna did not order Ferey to attack Fuentes on the 3rd, and that Loison and Ferey acted without orders, is directly contradicted by the Marshal's own dispatch, in which he takes all responsibility: 'J'espérais enlever Fuentes et m'y maintenir; je le fis attaquer, et il fut bientôt occupé.'

chand's division, and with this aid they once more advanced and got possession of the chapel and the few other buildings on the east side of Dos Casas, but could not make their way across the water again, or into the main body of the village.

The combat only stopped with the fall of night, though the fusillade across the brook was of course objectless, when neither side made any further definite attack. It had cost the French 652 men—mostly in Ferey's division[1], of whom 3 officers and 164 men were prisoners, taken when the village was re-stormed by Cadogan. The Allies, being on the defensive, and under cover, save at the moment of their counter-attack, only had 259 killed and hurt, of whom 48 were Portuguese. Colonel Williams, the original commander of the village, was severely wounded, but no other officer above the rank of captain was hit[2].

[1] But some in Marchand's, which must have been fairly heavily engaged, judging from the casualty list of officers in Martinien.

[2] For an excellent account of the first day's fighting in Fuentes village, see the diary of 'J. S.' of the 71st in Constable's *Memorials of the late War*, i. 87–9. The regiment charged right up the French slope after recovering the place, and was attacked ineffectually by cavalry. Marbot (ii. p. 459) has a story that the second attack of the French would have succeeded if the Hanoverian Legion, in its red coats, had not been fired into from the rear in mistake by the 66th Ligne, which took them for British.

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SECTION XXVI: CHAPTER III

THE BATTLE OF FUENTES DE OÑORO, MAY 5TH, 1811

MASSENA's attempt to 'take the bull by the horns'—for the phrase used at Bussaco may well be repeated for the attack on Fuentes village—had failed with loss. It was clear that he had hit upon a strong point in Wellington's well-hidden line, and he had paid dearly for his brutal methods. It remained to be seen whether he might not also find, as at Bussaco, some way of turning his adversary's position by a wide flank movement. Down-stream the ground looked very impracticable, and the ravine of the Dos Casas seemed to grow more and more formidable as it neared its junction with the Agueda. The Marshal therefore ordered Montbrun to make reconnaissances in every direction towards the right, on the side of Pozo Bello and Nava de Aver, and to report on the roads and the character of the ground, as well as on the disposition of the flank-guards of the enemy. The whole of the 4th of May was taken up in this fashion—there being no shots fired save in Fuentes de Oñoro itself, when Ferey's troops in the morning exchanged a lively fusillade across the brook with the British regiments occupying the main block of the village. The firing died down before noon, neither side being inclined to take the offensive[1].

Montbrun's reports came in during the afternoon, and were very important. The enemy, he said, had no more than a screen of cavalry pickets to the south of Fuentes, with a single detached battalion in the village of Pozo Bello. The end of his line had been found at Nava de Aver; it was composed only of the

[1] Masséna, in his dispatch describing the battle, says that on the morning of the 4th the Allies made a serious attempt to turn Ferey out of the houses beyond the brook which he occupied. But we have no trace of any regular fighting in any of the British narratives; there was certainly some bickering across the brook, but apparently nothing more.

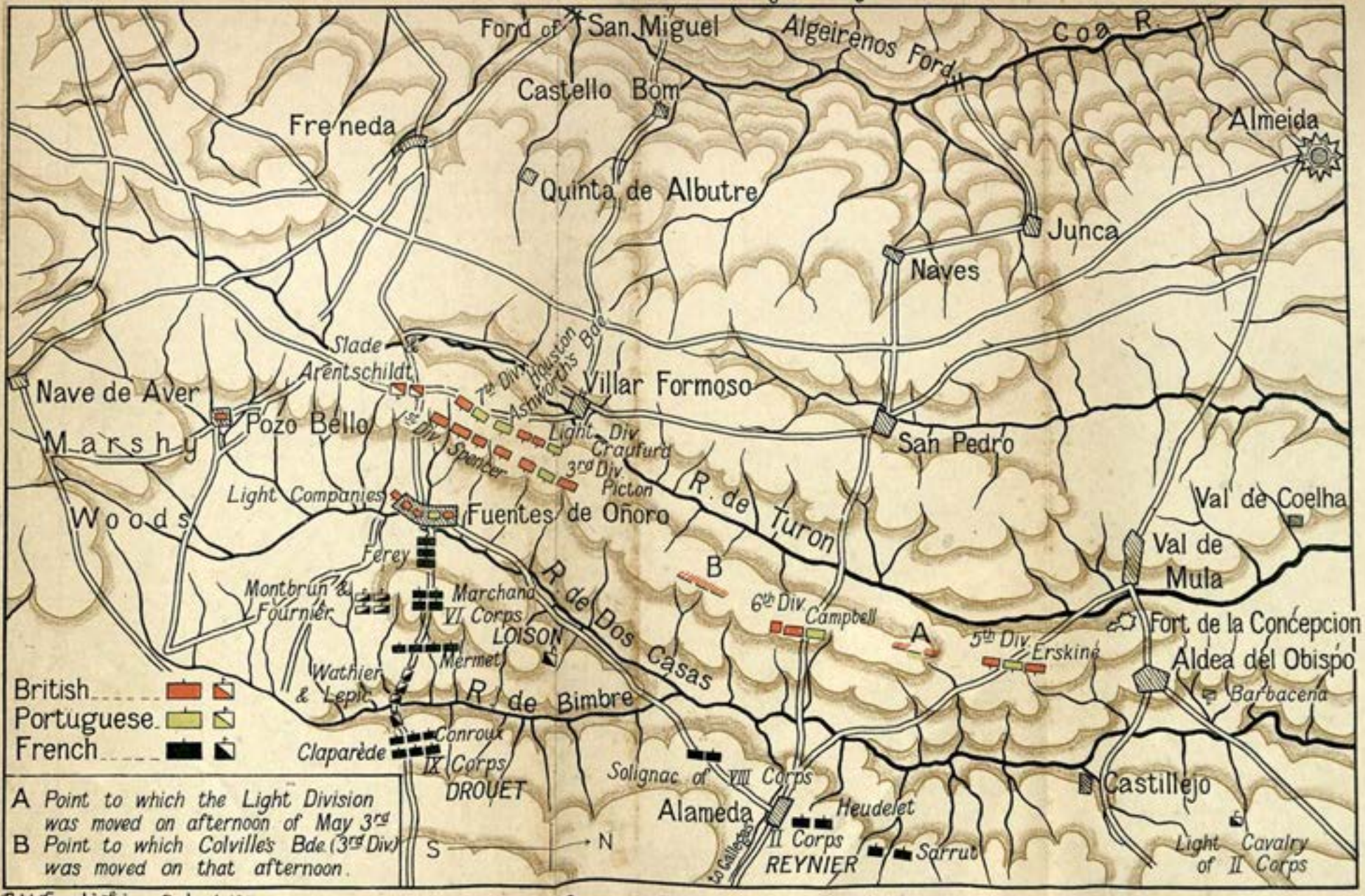
guerrilla band of Julian Sanchez. There was nothing to prevent a frontal attack on Pozo Bello by infantry, though the place was enclosed in woods and somewhat difficult to approach. There was accessible ground between Pozo Bello and Nava where cavalry might act, nor was the morass by the latter village, on which the extreme right of the Allies rested, impassable.

On this report Masséna based his new scheme of operations[1]. He resolved to turn Wellington's right with three infantry divisions and nearly the whole of his cavalry, while detaining him in his present position by attacks more or less pressed home. The striking-force was to be composed of Marchand's and Mermet's divisions of the 6th Corps with Solignac's division of the 8th Corps in support, and of all the horsemen save the skeleton squadrons attached to the 2nd and 6th Corps, viz. Montbrun's division of dragoons and the cavalry brigades of Fournier, Wathier, and Lepic, a mass of 17,000 infantry and 3,500 sabres. Reynier, opposite Wellington's left, was to make demonstrations, which were to be turned into a serious attack only if the Allies showed weakness in this direction. But in the centre there was to be a vigorous onslaught launched against Fuentes de Oñoro, when the turning movement was seen to be in progress to the south. For this, not only Ferey's division, already in position opposite the village, was told off, but also Drouet's two divisions of the 9th Corps. The place was to be carried at all costs, while Wellington was busy on his right, and a breach was thus to be made in the line of the Allies at the same moment that their wing was turned. Fourteen thousand infantry were concentrated opposite Fuentes for this purpose.

After dusk had fallen the French army made the preliminary movements required by the new plan. Montbrun's cavalry rode out far to the south, one brigade to the foot of the hill of Nava de Aver, the others to the ground east of Pozo Bello. To this latter point Marchand's and Mermet's infantry proceeded, with Solignac's division following them. Drouet brought the 9th Corps to the ground formerly occupied by the 6th Corps, while Reynier drew in a little southward, leaving one division opposite Fort Concepcion, but moving the other to the position in front of Alameda lately occupied by Solignac. A large detachment

[1] See his Orders for the day, in Appendix XIII.

FUENTES DE OÑORO. Positions on the first day (May 3rd 1811)



B.V. Barbishire, Oxford, 1911.

of sappers went out with Montbrun, to mend the paths across the morass which his flanking brigade had to cross.

Wellington had not been unaware that the want of movement on Masséna's part during the 4th probably covered some design against his flanks, and since his left flank was practically impregnable, he suspected that his right might be in danger, a suspicion which was made into certainty by reconnaissances which detected the French stirring among the marshy woods. The whole of his cavalry was thrown out in this direction, but the four regiments could only cover the ground inadequately, and being scattered in squadrons along three miles of front were weak everywhere. The most serious movement that he made was to detach the 7th Division as an outlying force to cover his right: two battalions were put into the village of Pozo Bello [1] and the wood in front of it; the remaining seven occupied a position on the slope to the west of that little place. This was a somewhat dangerous expedient—the 7th Division was the smallest and weakest unit in Wellington's army—it only contained two British battalions [2], and these were new-comers just landed at Lisbon. It was thrown out two miles from the main position, and on open ground not presenting any particular advantage for defence—indeed, if the enemy should attack in strength, it would be compelled to act as a mere detaining and observing rather than a fighting force. For though it was well placed for foiling a mere attempt to turn the Fuentes position by a small detachment and a short lateral movement [3], yet if the enemy's flanking manœuvre were made by a large body and far afield, it was clear that the 7th Division would have to retreat in haste towards the main position. This being so, one wonders that Wellington did not select one of his best divisions—the 3rd or the Light—for such a responsible post. But he apparently did not foresee the whole plan of Massena. 'Imagining,' he writes in his dispatch describing the battle, 'that the enemy would endeavour to obtain possession of Fuentes de Oñoro and of the ground occupied by the troops

[1] 85th and 2nd Caçadores.

[2] 51st and 85th, the other regiments being foreign (*Chasseurs Britanniques* and Brunswick Oels) or Portuguese.

[3] Its position, from this point of view, might be compared to that of Pakenham and the 3rd Division at Salamanca.

behind that village, by crossing the Dos Casas at Pozo Velho, I moved the 7th Division under Major-General Houston to the right, in order to protect, if possible, that passage.' But Masséna was set not only on attacking Pozo Bello, but on turning it, and taking it in the rear by a wide sweep of his whole disposable cavalry force. Over 20,000 men were on the move, and Houston had but 4,000 infantry, with 1,400 horse to guard his flank.

The other preparation which Wellington made for a possible battle on the 5th was to draw back the Light Division at dusk from the left wing to its original position behind Fuentes village in reserve. He also withdrew the numerous light companies which had formed the original garrison of that place, and left there only two battalions, the 1/71st and 1/79th, with the 2/24th to support them at the top of the hill.

The fighting on the 5th of May began very early. Just at daybreak the extreme right flank of Wellington's cavalry screen was attacked by the outermost of the enemy's turning columns, composed of two regiments of Montbrun's dragoons [1]. This took place under the hill of Nava de Aver, where Julian Sanchez with his guerrilleros had been posted on the 3rd, while two squadrons of the 14th Light Dragoons had been moved up to his support on the night of the 4th. The guerrilleros kept a bad look-out, and in the dusk of the morning were surprised by the enemy—they drew off hastily to the south without making any resistance. Not so the two British squadrons under Major Brotherton

[1] The accusation against Montbrun, made by Napier and several French writers, of having waited for two hours after dawn, and then of having suffered himself to be delayed for another hour by the pursuit of a mere Spanish irregular band, is clearly groundless. We have the diaries of two officers of the squadrons of the 14th (Major Brotherton and Cornet F. Hall) who prove that the attack was made in the dusk of early dawn. 'Just at daybreak,' says the former, 'I requested Don Julian to show me where his pickets were placed. He pointed out to me what he said was one of them, but I observed to him that in the dusk of morning it looked too large for a picket. The sun rising rapidly dispelled the fog, and the illusion at the same time, for Don Julian's picket proved to be a whole French regiment dismounted. They now mounted immediately and advanced against us.' (See the Diary in Hamilton's *History of the 14th Hussars.*)

of the 14th, who fought a running fight for two miles, showing front repeatedly, till their flank was on each occasion turned by the vastly superior numbers of the enemy. They were driven in at last upon Pozo Bello, where lay two battalions of the 7th Division, whose extreme right picket, placed in a wood, stopped the enemy's pursuit by a volley. The main body of the French cavalry seems to have started a little later than the flanking force which assailed Nava de Aver, as its leading regiments only attacked the British cavalry screen to the right of that village some time after Brotherton's squadrons had begun to be driven in. Here the line of observation was furnished by a squadron of the 16th Light Dragoons and another of the 1st Hussars of the King's German Legion, who drew together, and gallantly, but rather rashly, attempted to stop the enemy's advance at a defile between two woods. The squadron of the 16th, charging into a mass of the enemy, suffered heavily and had its commanding officer captured[1]. The Germans then took their turn, but were also driven back with loss. The broken troops had to fall back in all haste till, like Brotherton's detachment, they came in upon the flank of the village of Pozo Bello, and formed up there. The French cavalry, extending over the slopes when they were clear of the woods, appeared in overpowering numbers, and showed an evident intention to turn the right flank of the British force, which they were strong enough to do even when the whole twelve squadrons of Wellington's cavalry, falling back from various points of the line which they had been observing, were concentrated on the flank of the woods and enclosures of Pozo Bello.

Up to this moment, an hour after daybreak, only French cavalry had been seen, but the infantry now joined in. The two divisions of Marchand and Mermet had been moved in the night to a point opposite Pozo Bello: when the skirmishing to the right of that place was growing hot, the leading division, that of Marchand, charged in upon the wood in front of the

[1] Captain Belli, who had joined the regiment from England only the night before. A sergeant and six men were killed in trying to rescue him. See Tomkinson's diary, p. 101. This officer of the 16th accuses Major Meyer of the Hussars of having lost the right moment for a charge by indecision. But the K.G.L. narratives (see Schwertfeger) show that Meyer fought hard, and was an enterprising officer.

village, cleared out of it the skirmishers of the 85th regiment and the 2nd Caçadores, and then stormed the village also, driving out of it the two battalions, which vainly tried to maintain themselves there against the crushing superiority of the attack. As they were emerging from among the houses in great disorder, they were fallen upon and ridden over by a French light cavalry regiment, which had pushed round their flank unobserved. Both battalions suffered heavily: between them they lost over 150 men, of whom 85 were killed and wounded and some 70 unwounded prisoners. It is marvellous that the two corps were not entirely destroyed—but they were saved by a charge of two squadrons of the German Hussars, and succeeded in forming up with promptness and moving away in the direction of the main body of the 7th Division, which was visible a mile to the west, on the opposite slope of the bottom in which Pozo Bello lies.

The next hour was a very dangerous one: the French infantry divisions, emerging from the captured village and the woods, began to form up in heavy columns, threatening both to attack the Fuentes de Oñoro position on its right flank, and to cut in between the isolated 7th Division and the rest of the army. Montbrun's cavalry, displaying regiment after regiment, came on in hot pursuit of the troops that had escaped from Pozo Bello and of the British squadrons that were covering them. They were already outflanking the 7th Division on the right, by means of the detachment which had come from Nava de Aver.

Wellington was surprised at the strength of the turning force —its numbers were far greater than he had foreseen, and he was forced to take a new resolution and form a fresh battle-order. The most important thing was to save the 7th Division from being cut off, and to bring it back into line with the rest of the army. Accordingly he directed a chosen unit—the Light Division, now once more under the indomitable Craufurd, who had joined on the preceding night—to advance from its position in reserve behind Fuentes, and to move out along the slope of the low heights to the right, so as to come into touch with Houston and the cavalry, and to help them to get home. Meanwhile the rest of the centre of the army—the 1st and 3rd

Divisions and Ashworth's Portuguese[1], formed a new line of battle, *en potence* to the original right flank of the British position. They were drawn up along the dominating ground between the rocky hillocks that overhang the village of Fuentes and the descent into the valley of the Turon brook. This is the last of the high ground—to the right of it (as has been before mentioned) the watershed between the Dos Casas and the Turon ceases to be composed of a commanding ridge, and sinks into gentle slopes[2]. Thus Fuentes de Oñoro became the projecting point of a battle-order thrown back at right angles to the original position—where the 5th and 6th Divisions still continued to occupy their old post opposite Reynier. Formations *en potence* are proverbially dangerous, because of the liability of the angle to be enfiladed and crushed by artillery fire. But in this case the danger was less than usual, since Wellington for once in his life had more guns than the French, and the lie of the plateau was such that the lower parts of Fuentes village might be enfiladed, but not the ground above it by the church and rocks, nor the plateau behind it, where the ground occupied by the 3rd Division was out of sight of the French on the lesser heights. Indeed, the holding of the houses in the bottom was of comparatively little importance to Wellington, so long as he kept his grip on the upper end of the straggling village. Here, on the double-headed height crowned by the church and the rocks, was the real pivot of the position.

Wellington had ample time to move the 1st and 3rd Divisions with Ashworth's Portuguese into the new position—none of them had much over a mile to march, since all had been concentrated behind Fuentes when the alarm came. The enemy's approach was slow, partly because his infantry had to disentangle itself from the houses of Pozo Bello and the surrounding wood, and to form in a fresh front, partly because his cavalry became wholly absorbed in a running fight with the Light and

[1] 1st Division in four brigades on the right; then Ashworth; then the 3rd Division next to Fuentes village.

[2] Along which the modern railway line is conducted from Villar Formoso to Ciudad Rodrigo. Fuentes de Oñoro station is a mile from the village, and only a few hundred yards from the Portuguese customs-station of Villar Formoso.

7th Divisions, and had no attention to spare for any other direction.

Masséna's plan, when he had got his left wing out of the woods, soon became clear. He was intending to break in with his cavalry between the 7th Division and the rest of the army, while Marchand and Mermet were to attack the new front of the 1st and 3rd Divisions, and the 9th Corps, with Ferey's division, was to smash in the projecting point of Wellington's position, by storming Fuentes village and the height behind it. Reynier, as on the 3rd of May, was to demonstrate against the allied left, but not to attack till success in the centre seemed assured. From the course of the action it is evident that the Marshal's main intention was to beat Wellington by hard fighting, and to break up his army—not merely to manœuvre him into a bad strategical position and to cut his more available lines of communication, so as to force him into a difficult and dangerous retreat. If the last had been Masséna's intention—as some authors suggest—the course of the battle would have been different. But he made no attempt to send cavalry to intercept the roads to Castello Bom, still less to detach infantry against Wellington's rear. Having turned his enemy's flank, and forced him to make a new front, he showed no further desire to manœuvre, but proceeded to batter away at the troops in front of him, trusting that numbers and impetus would secure him the victory.

The fight fell for some time into two absolutely distinct sections—an attempt by Drouet's and Ferey's three divisions to carry Fuentes de Oñoro village and break Wellington's centre, and an attempt to cut up, by the cavalry arm alone, the 7th Division and its attendant squadrons, before they could be succoured and drawn back into Wellington's new line of defence. It was only after some time that these two combats became joined, by an attempt—which was never pressed home—to attack that part of the British position which lay to the right rear of Fuentes de Oñoro.

The fighting west of Pozo Bello may be taken first, as it was a logical continuation of the engagement in the early morning. Here Montbrun had under his hand four cavalry brigades—those of Wathier, Fournier, Cavrois, and Ornano—about 2,700 sabres,

with Lepic's 800 guard cavalry as his reserve—though, as it turned out in the end, the use of that reserve was to be denied him. In front of him were the two battalions recently evicted from Pozo Bello, with the British cavalry brigades of Slade and Arentschildt (about 1,400 sabres) and Bull's horse-artillery troop, which had drawn up to protect the retreat of the routed battalions towards the main body of the 7th Division. General Houston with that force (one British battalion, two foreign, and four Portuguese battalions [1]) was engaged in taking up new ground, on the slope which is separated from Pozo Bello by the shallow trough forming the valley of the Dos Casas brook. Montbrun's object was, of course, to break the British horsemen, and then to fall upon and destroy the shaken infantry which they were protecting, before they could cross the valley. There resulted a very fierce and long-sustained cavalry combat, infinitely creditable to the four British regiments, who had to fight a detaining action against numbers about double their own. They were bound to retire in the end—and indeed had no other intention—but it was their duty to hold off the enemy till the infantry behind them had got into order. This was done, though at great cost, the regiments retiring by alternate squadrons, while the rear squadron at each change of front charged, often winning a temporary and partial success over the enemy in its immediate front, but always forced to give back as the French reserve came up. 'When we charged,' wrote a participant in this long combat, 'they would often turn their horses, and our men shouted in the pursuit—but go which way they might, we were but scattered drops amid their host, and could not possibly arrest their progress. We had again to go about and retire [2].' The British cavalry, though losing heavily, never got out of hand, and could be still used as efficient units down to the end of this phase of the battle. Of their total casualty list of 157 nearly all must have been lost in this hard work; it is noticeable that only one officer and four men were taken prisoners, a sufficient proof that there was no such rout as

[1] 51st Foot, *Chasseurs Britanniques*, the incomplete battalion of Brunswick Oels (short of two companies detached), and the 7th and 19th Portuguese, commanded on this day by Doyle, colonel of the 19th.

[2] Unpublished Diary of Hall of the 14th Light Dragoons.

French accounts describe—for a rout always implies a serious loss in 'missing.'

After a running fight, the British cavalry was driven back on to the 7th Division, which (now joined by the two detached battalions) was drawn up on the best position that Houston could select on the slope above the valley: his centre was in a projecting angle among some rocks which crop up in the generally bare hillside—his wings thrown back, and partly covered by stone walls forming the boundaries of meadows. The much-tried British squadrons, clearing off to the side, took position on the left rear of the infantry, leaving the 7th Division in face of the now rather confused mass of Montbrun's horsemen, whose order was none the better for the long and well-contested combat in which they had been engaged. The French general made a serious attempt to break into the 7th Division: while skirmishers demonstrated against its front, and a light battery just sent forward by Masséna shelled its centre, a brigade of dragoons turned its right wing and tried to roll it up. This attack was foiled by the *Chasseurs Britanniques*, who, drawn up behind a long stone wall, had apparently escaped Montbrun's notice; receiving a staggering volley at close range, just when they supposed that they had come upon an unprotected flank, the advancing squadrons fell back in confusion. Another charge, made against the 51st, was also beaten off by musketry [1]. The French then came to a stand—it was clear that they wanted infantry if they were to get any advantage over the 7th Division, which was now well settled down into its position. But Marchand's and Mermet's battalions had not followed Montbrun across the valley, but had begun to march straight against the centre of Wellington's new line, west of Fuentes de Oñoro.

At this moment a new force came upon the scene; Craufurd and the Light Division were at hand, marching along the higher slope of the watershed between the Turon and the Dos Casas, in order to connect with the 7th Division. But Craufurd had not come to form up and hold the ground where Houston was already engaged. Wellington's orders were that the 7th Division should move to its rear, cross the Turon, and prolong, to the

[1] See Journal of Wheeler of the 51st, pp. 13–14.

west of that stream, the new line already formed by the 1st and 3rd Divisions. It was to make this movement covered by the Light Division and the cavalry, who were to hold the slope till Houston was well on his way and out of danger. They were then to retire behind the 1st Division. This was a dangerous task for Craufurd and his men, but Wellington had selected them precisely because he knew that they were to be trusted. While Montbrun was busy rearranging his disordered brigades, Houston slipped down the reverse slope of the hillside where he had been lying, crossed the Turon, and finally drew up with one brigade (Sontag's) on the well-marked heights west of that stream, and the other (Doyle's Portuguese) in the village of Freneda, a mile further to the right. Thus Wellington had once more an outlying flank-guard, covering the roads which lead to the Coa and the Bridge of Castello Bom. With the exception of the two battalions cut up at the opening of the fight, the 7th Division had suffered very slightly—apparently the French cavalry had not harmed it, but their attached battery had caused some casualties, which came in all to no more than 90 men[1] out of the 3,800 in the seven battalions which had not fought at Pozo Bello.

On the departure of the 7th Division all the peril and responsibility now fell on Craufurd and the already much-tried cavalry, who had to make their way back for a full mile along the open slope of the hillside, to join their comrades in the new position south of Fuentes. Montbrun, though he had failed in his attack on infantry in position, thought that he ought to have better fortune against men retreating over a rolling upland, so urged the pursuit with great energy. Craufurd formed his men in battalion squares, save a few companies of the rifles and Caçadores, whom he threw into thickets and enclosures to the right and left, where he thought them safe against horsemen.

[1] The 51st lost 6 men; Brunswick Oels, 18; *Chasseurs Britanniques*, 58; 7th Portuguese, 8 men; 19th, 2 men—of these 92 only 19 were prisoners, so that it is clear that the French cavalry never got in among them, or cut them up in the style described by Pelet, Fournier, Fririon, or Masséna himself. When a body of 4,000 infantry attacked by cavalry has only 90 casualties, we know that no part of it can have been ridden over or seriously broken.

The main body retreated in a line of squares, with the cavalry and the battery of horse artillery in the intervals. Whenever the French came forward, the guns played upon them, and the British cavalry charged by squadrons to check the onslaught. So beautifully was the retreat managed, that Montbrun never got a chance to charge the infantry at advantage. 'The steadiness and regularity with which the troops performed their movement, the whole time exposed to a cannonade, and followed across a plain by a numerous cavalry, ready to pounce on the squares if the least disorder should be detected, was acknowledged by hundreds of unprejudiced spectators (who witnessed it from the heights) to have been a masterpiece of military evolution. We sustained a very trifling loss from the cannonade[1],' writes one Light Division officer. Another (Napier himself) in more stirring phrases tells how 'many times Montbrun threatened to charge Craufurd's squares, but always found them too dangerous to meddle with. They appeared but as specks, with close behind them 5,000 [read 3,500] horsemen, trampling, bounding, shouting for the word to charge. Fifteen guns were up with the French cavalry, the eighth corps[2] was in order of battle behind them, the woods on their right were filled with Loison's skirmishers, and if that general, pivoting upon Fuentes, had come forth with the 6th Corps, while Drouet assailed the village and the cavalry made a general charge, the loose crowd of non-combatants and broken troops would have been violently dashed against the 1st Division, to intercept its fire and break its ranks, and the battle might have been lost[3].' But Montbrun knew as well as Craufurd that intact infantry of good quality cannot be broken when it is securely formed in square, and any attempt to molest the Light Division by artillery fire was checked by the self-sacrificing efforts of the British cavalry and guns, who fought their best to keep off the enemy. Bull's guns were incessantly unlimbering and firing a few rounds in the intervals of the squares, and then retreating rapidly to a new position. On the only occasion when a French battery

[1] Leach (of the 95th), *Life of an Old Soldier*, p. 214.

[2] By some error Napier says the *8th* Corps, but the only division of that corps present (Solignac) was in reserve far off.

[3] Napier, iii. 152.

got close up it was charged in front, with desperate gallantry, by a squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons, who suffered terribly, but won the necessary minutes for the square to which it was neighbour to get out of range [1]. At last the whole retiring force, horse and foot, came into Wellington's lines, with the French close in their rear, and found safety with the 1st Division. Two incidents marked the last moments of the retreat: at one point occurred an episode which Napier has immortalized, with some inaccuracy of detail, in one of his most brilliant 'purple passages.' Captain Norman Ramsay, with two guns of Bull's troop, had halted, not for the first time, for a shot or two at the pursuing cavalry; lingering a moment too long, he found himself cut off, just as he had limbered up, by a swarm of *chasseurs*, who rode in from the flank. But he put his guns to the gallop, and, charging himself in front of them with the mounted gunners, was cutting his way through the French when he was brought off by friends. On one side a squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons under Brotherton, on the other a squadron of the Royals, had turned back when they saw the artillery in danger. They fell upon the *chasseurs* before Ramsay had suffered any hurt, and saved him and his guns, which were brought into the lines of the 1st Division amid loud cheers from all who had seen the affair [2].

[1] See Brotherton's Memoir, in Hamilton's *History of the 14th Light Dragoons*, pp. 84–5: 'At Fuentes d'Oñoro we had a very fine fellow, Captain Knipe, killed through his gallant obstinacy, if I may so call it. We had, the night before, been discussing the best mode for cavalry to attack batteries in the open field. He maintained, contrary to us all, that they ought to be charged in front, instead of by gaining their flank and avoiding their fire. The experiment next day was fatal to him. He had the opportunity of charging a French battery, which he did by attacking immediately in front. Their discharge of round shot he got through with little loss, but they most rapidly reloaded with grape, and his party got a close and murderous discharge, which almost entirely destroyed it—he himself receiving a grape shot through the body.' As Montbrun had not got up his guns during the first cavalry charges, this must have been during Craufurd's fight.

[2] Napier makes two serious errors—he represents Ramsay as having a whole battery, instead of two guns only: and he underrates the assistance given by the cavalry, which is detailed in Brotherton's memoir, as well as in the regimental history of the Royals (p. 118).

A little to the left of the point where this happy escape took place there was an episode of a less fortunate kind. The skirmishing line of the 1st Division was extended along the foot of the slope on which its brigades were arrayed. When the rolling mass composed of the Light Division squares, their attendant cavalry, and the French in hot pursuit, drew near to the position, the officer in charge of the pickets of the Guards' brigade (Lieutenant-Colonel Hill of the 3rd Guards) directed them to close up into solid order, for safety's sake: this they did, forming a small square. In this formation they beat off the rather disorderly charge of the French horse; but Colonel Hill then very unwisely extended them again, and thus exposed them in the most dangerous order to a second charge of a French regiment (13th *Chasseurs*) which came in from the side after the main attack was over. The three companies were taken in flank, rolled up, and very badly mauled, sixty or eighty men being killed or wounded, and Hill himself with another officer and nineteen men being taken prisoners[1]. The rest had time to club together and defend themselves, till they were rescued by the charge of a

[1] The account of this in Wellington's dispatch is hopelessly obscure, because instead of writing 'the pickets of the 1st Division under Lieut.-Col. Hill,' he wrote by a slip of the pen 'the *regiments* of the 1st Division under Lieut.-Col. Hill.' Hill of course (being a regimental major though a titular Lieut.-colonel, after the Guards system) did not command whole regiments, as Wellington's words imply, but simply the skirmishing line of pickets. The facts are made quite clear by Stepney of the Coldstreams and Stothert's diary (who calls them 'the pickets of the Guards'), Grattan (who calls them 'the advance,' or 'the light troops of the 1st Division'), and Hall's unpublished diary, which gives the whole story in a nutshell: 'The enemy made a dart at the pickets of the 1st Division, with the expectation of sweeping off the line before our cavalry could support them. They succeeded in part, by coming up unexpectedly, but when they were perceived the men, by collecting into knots (or 'hiving' as they called it) repulsed them with the bayonet. A troop of the 14th Light Dragoons and some of the Royals were ordered out to the skirmish and suffered some loss.'

It is this incident which General Fournier, who led the charge, transforms in his dispatch (in the *Archives de la Guerre*) into the breaking two squares of the Light Division and taking General Craufurd prisoner—a wild story. Fririon makes the charge capture '300 Hussars of the English Royal Guard!' Both say that three battalions of the Guards laid down their arms.

squadron of the Royals under Colonel Clifton and a troop of the 14th Light Dragoons, which brought off most of the survivors. The total loss was about 100 men[1].

This was only one of several partial attacks made by the French cavalry against the front of Wellington's new position[2]. Montbrun seems to have thought that he could continue to press the Allies—not recognizing that he had hitherto had to do with troops voluntarily retiring, but had now run against a battle-line which intended to stand. Indeed, he wished to try the effect of a general charge against the front of the 1st Division, and with that object sent orders to his reserve, Lepic's brigade of Guard cavalry, to come to the front, and head an advance, which the rallied squadrons of his main body would support. Lepic, however, refused to move, saying that personally he was only too ready to attack, but that he had received specific orders not to use his brigade save at the direct command of his immediate superior, Marshal Bessières[3]. While the Marshal was being sought (he was ultimately found, after much delay, behind Pozo Bello), the moment which Montbrun supposed suitable for a charge passed away.

With this episode the advance of Montbrun's cavalry ended, frittering itself away on the edge of the new position of the Allies. Its total effect had been to roll in the flanking force which Wellington had thrown out, and to gain some three miles of ground. The loss of the British had been appreciable, but can

[1] Deducting the regiments in Fuentes de Oñoro (71st and 79th) the 1st Division lost about 400 men in the whole day, of whom probably 100 in this petty disaster.

[2] One was repelled by the 42nd, which met it in line.

[3] Of this episode, only hinted at by Fririon, and not mentioned at all by Masséna in his official dispatch, we have a vivid description in Marbot, which might be doubted if it were not borne out by hints in Napier and Thiébault and by the direct statement of Marshal Jourdan in his memoirs. If Lepic had charged, it is hard to see what effect he could have produced, for all Peninsular experience went to prove that infantry in battle order on a good position could not be broken by cavalry, however daring. The 1st and 3rd Divisions were well established on their ground, with a steep slope below them, and could not have been moved. Lepic's refusal to charge, however, always takes a prominent part in the description of Fuentes de Oñoro by French writers, not eye-witnesses, who are anxious to prove that Wellington ought to have lost the battle.

hardly be called severe—under 250 in the 7th Division, about 150 in the cavalry, and 200 in the 1st Division. Montbrun's squadrons on their side had 359 casualties, to which may be added perhaps a hundred in Marchand's division of the 6th Corps, which fought in the attack on Pozo Bello. The strategical advantage obtained by forcing Wellington to throw back his right wing, and to leave the roads towards Castello Bom exposed to the possibility of flanking cavalry raids, was considerable. But it was less important than it appeared, since the mere threatening of his communications was useless, unless he could be forced or manœuvred out of his position; and this was not to be done. He himself saw this clearly, writing in his dispatch which describes the battle: 'I had occupied Poço Velho and that neighbourhood, in hopes that I should be able to maintain the communication across the Coa by Sabugal, &c., as well as to provide for the blockade of Almeida, which objects, as was now obvious, were become incompatible with each other. I therefore abandoned that which was the less important[1].' He then proceeds to show how his new position still covered the blockade of Almeida, and (by means of the troops placed beyond the Turon) rendered it hard for the enemy to make any real attempt towards Castello Bom—since this could not be done save by an isolated detachment. Indeed, Masséna had still to beat the allied army, and the preliminary operations now ended had done nothing more than thrust it back into its fighting position.

That, according to Masséna's design, the second act of the battle was to consist in a vigorous attempt to break Wellington's new line, is clear from his own dispatch. And the point to be pierced was the projecting angle of its centre, in, and to the right of, Fuentes village. Here the attack was to be concentric and enveloping, Ferey's division and the two divisions of the 9th Corps being intended to storm the village, after which Marchand's and Mermet's divisions, supported by Solignac's, were to assail the heights to its south-west, where Picton and Spencer were now in line. Six of the eight infantry divisions of the French army were to attack on a front of not much over a mile. This was a powerful combination, but the position which it was to assail was also

[1] To Lord Liverpool, 8th May. *Dispatches*, vii. p. 531.

very strong. The village, with its barricaded streets and its tiers of houses trending up the hill, was susceptible of indefinite defence. The hillside above it and to its right was a perfect fighting-ground—with the ravine in its front, fine artillery emplacements along the sky-line, and a flat plateau behind, on which the main line and the reserves could stand sheltered, till the moment when they were required to deal with an infantry attack.

Masséna's plan was to storm the village first, and then, when Ferey and Drouet should have pushed through it, and have got a lodgement on the plateau, to deliver the frontal attack with the other three divisions. He did not intend Marchand and Mermet to move till the projecting angle of Wellington's line was turned and broken in by the success of the other attack. For to send forward these two divisions of the 6th Corps for an assault on the fine position opposite them, while it was held by intact troops with their flanks properly covered, would have been to invite a repetition of Bussaco. The plateau was held by a perfectly adequate force, the four brigades of the 1st Division (minus three battalions detached to hold Fuentes de Oñoro [1]), Ashworth's Portuguese brigade, and the whole 3rd Division, over 13,000 men, on a short front, while the Light Division had now returned to take its place in reserve. Wellington had these troops drawn up in a double line, the 1st Division next the Turon, Ashworth's brigade in the centre, and the 3rd Division above Fuentes, whose defence it was to feed, if necessary, by detaching battalions from its second line, which was formed by Mackinnon's brigade. Owing to the numerical inferiority of the French artillery, Wellington had also been able to concentrate a larger number of guns (six batteries) on the critical point of the battlefield than his enemy could bring against him, so that the 'artillery preparation,' to maul his line before a general attack, was bound to fail. The French guns were overpowered in the contest.

[1] 2/24th and 1/79th from Nightingale's brigade, and the 1/71st from Howard's, in all 1,850 bayonets, leaving the remainder of the 1st Division with 5,700 bayonets, the 3rd Division with 5,400, and Ashworth with 2,500 as the main line holding the plateau, with 3,700 of Craufurd's Light Division in reserve.

It must not be supposed that Masséna waited for the arrival of Marchand's and Mermet's infantry in front of the position before commencing his attack. The troops opposite Fuentes had been ordered to storm the village when Montbrun's operations had begun to develop successfully, but 'sans rien hasarder[1],' i. e. they were not to move if the attempt to turn the British right failed. But when the cavalry were seen sweeping the hillsides beyond Pozo Bello, and driving the enemy before them, the attack on Fuentes was begun by Ferey's division, which was already in possession of the few houses on the east side of the Dos Casas brook. The assault commenced at about two hours after dawn, when the combat was already in full progress to the south, by a brisk attack which drove the defenders of the village (the 71st and 79th) out of its lower portion. Two companies of the latter regiment, barricaded in some buildings near the water, were completely surrounded and forced to surrender, after all their officers had been wounded. Ninety-four men were taken prisoners. The remainder of this Highland battalion and of its countrymen of the 71st rallied in the upper end of the village, and when joined by the regiment in reserve (the 2/24th) came forward again, and drove the French into the lower houses by the river. The fight came to a standstill for a moment, Ferey's division (which had already suffered so severely on the 3rd) being now a spent force so far as initiative went.

But Drouet, who had been told to give Ferey his best support, then fed the fight with three *bataillons d'élite*, composed of the eighteen grenadier companies of his two divisions[2]. These picked troops, who were mistaken for men of the Imperial Guard by their opponents because of their bearskins and tall

[1] Masséna's dispatch, see Appendix, no. XIII. Drouet is therefore wrongly blamed by French critics who say that he attacked an hour or two late—he had to wait to see the turning movement in successful progress.

[2] British narratives persistently state that infantry of the Imperial Guard fought in Fuentes village. But it is absolutely certain that there were none of those troops with Masséna's army. The explanation lies in the fact that the grenadier company in a French regiment wore bearskins, and that a mass of grenadier companies therefore could easily be mistaken for Guards. All 71st and 79th diaries speak of fighting with 'the Imperial Guards' for this reason.

plumes, came on with great courage, and cleared all the middle slopes of the village, driving the garrison up to the summit of the double-headed hill, near the church and the rocks. The fighting was very deadly to both sides, but more so to the French, who had to dislodge an obstinate foe from barricaded houses and lines of stone walls. It ended in the establishment of the attacking force on the brink of the summit, but further the grenadiers could not go—the head of the village and the plateau above it was still maintained by the 71st, 79th, and 24th, and Wellington began to feed the defending force by drafting into the upper end of Fuentes, one after another, the light companies of several brigades of the 1st and 3rd Divisions—the same detachments who had defended the village upon May 3—in succession those of Löwe's German brigade, of Howard's brigade, of Ashworth's and Power's Portuguese, were sent to the critical point. The whole of the 6th Caçadores followed.

But the progress of the attack had been so far encouraging that at this moment—about noon—Drouet resolved to finish the affair by putting in heavy supports from Conroux's and Claparéde's divisions for a final blow [1], which should heave the French line up on to the plateau, clear the allied troops out of the last few houses of the village, and definitively break Wellington's line at its projecting point. Eight or ten fresh battalions charged across the brook in column, through the narrow streets encumbered by dead and wounded, and, ascending the slope, drove their enemies out of the church and the rocks beside it. This was the critical moment of the day—the only one at which Wellington lost possession of the whole of the advanced post which so perfectly defended his centre.

'Such a series of attacks,' writes an eye-witness [2], 'constantly supported by fresh troops, required exertions more than human

[1] Masséna's dispatch speaks only of Claparéde's division as being put in, but as Martinien's lists show, Conroux must have been still more heavily engaged, for his division lost 31 officers killed and wounded, Claparéde's only 25. Moreover, it was one of Conroux's battalions (9th Léger) with which the 88th were engaged mainly, and this battalion alone lost 8 officers. About three battalions of each division remained in reserve and had few or no casualties, viz. the 64th, 88th, 95th, 96th, 100th, 103rd of the Line.

[2] Grattan of the 88th; see his *Adventures*, &c., pp. 66–7.

to withstand: every effort had been made to maintain the post, but efforts, however great, have their limits. Our soldiers had now been engaged in this unequal contest for upwards of eight hours; the heat was excessive, and their ammunition was nearly expended. The town presented a shocking sight: our Highlanders lay dead in heaps, while the other regiments, though less remarkable in dress, were scarcely so in the number of their slain. The French grenadiers, with their immense caps and gaudy plumes, lay in piles of ten and twenty together—some dead, others wounded, with barely strength sufficient to move, their exhausted state and the weight of their cumbrous accoutrements making it impossible for them to crawl out of the dreadful fire of grape and round shot which the enemy poured into the town. The Highlanders had been driven to the churchyard at the very top of the village, and were fighting with the French grenadiers across the graves and tombstones. The 9th French Light Infantry (the leading battalion of Conroux's division) had penetrated as far as the church, and were preparing to debouch upon the rear of our centre.'

This part of the British army, the second or reserve line of the 3rd Division—whose front line was nearer the edge of the position, facing Marchand—was composed of Mackinnon's brigade, the 1/45th, 74th, and 1/88th. On these troops devolved the responsibility of stopping the gap, by recovering the church and the head of the village. The moment for their action had evidently come. Mackinnon sent for leave to charge to Wellington by Sir Edward Pakenham, who galloped back in a few minutes, for he had found his chief only a few yards away, watching for the crisis. 'He says you may go—come along[1],' was the prompt reply, and Mackinnon moved down with the 74th and 88th in column of sections, left in front, leaving the 45th in reserve on his old position.

There was a fearful clash by the church at the mouth of the village street, between the 88th, the leading British regiment, and the 4th battalion of the 9th Léger at the head of Conroux's column. They met front to front, both in column, and are said

[1] This again from Grattan, who tells how his colonel, Wallace of Bussaco fame, said that he would rather have to retake Fuentes than to cover a retreat to the Coa.

to have fought with the bayonet for some moments—the rarest thing in war; it was only in a street combat like this that such a chance could happen. After a sharp bicker the French battalion gave way and turned back. At the same moment the 74th charged down another lane which led into the village, and all the broken remnants of the Highland regiments and the light companies cheered and advanced among the lanes and houses. The enemy yielded at every point, seeing their main column beaten back, and the advance of the British line swept the whole village as far as the brook: some of the pursuers, going too far, were killed even on its further side. It was impossible to maintain the houses near the water, which were too much exposed to the fire of the French artillery on the opposite bank. But the 74th and 88th made a firm lodgement in the middle and upper parts of the village, and were not molested by any further attempt on the part of Drouet to expel them, though his guns made their position sufficiently uncomfortable. The commander of the 9th Corps contented himself with bringing forward his last intact battalions to the front, to cover the routed masses, while they were getting into order again to the rear of their original position.

The attempt to storm Fuentes had failed with loss, and by about two o'clock the decisive fighting was over. The 9th Corps had lost 835 men in the street-fighting, Ferey's division at least 400 more [1]. On the part of the defenders, the 71st and 79th, the original garrison of the village, had 458 casualties, including 119 prisoners taken at the moment of the first storm —this was a loss of 30 per cent., as they had 1,419 officers and men on the field. Cameron, the colonel of the 79th, was shot from a house during the last victorious charge. The 74th and 88th, who finally recovered Fuentes by their decisive charge, lost

[1] It is unfortunately impossible to disentangle the losses of the various battalions of the 9th Corps, as there is no regimental return, but only a corps return of its losses available. But some aid is given by Martinien's invaluable *Liste des officiers tués et blessés pendant les Guerres de l'Empire*, which shows that the battalions that suffered most were the 4/9th Léger with 8 officers hurt out of 21 present, the 4/63rd Ligne with 7 out of 19, the 4/24th Ligne and 4/28th Léger, each with 6 out of 17, and the 4/16th Léger with 6 out of 16. These, clearly, were the units that were most engaged. Some belonged to Conroux's, some to Claparède's division.

only 116 men in doing so. The 2/24th, with the light companies and Caçadores who had formed the earlier reinforcements, seem to have had about 160 casualties, but it is impossible to separate the losses of the light companies in the village from those of the battalions to which they belonged, who were drawn up in the main position and suffered certain casualties there. On the whole the defenders of Fuentes seem to have lost about 800 men, its assailants about 1,300, out of the 4,000 and the 7,000 men whom they respectively engaged within it: such is the value of the defensive, even when the fighting comes to close quarters among houses and enclosures.

Masséna had evidently considered the capture of the village of Fuentes as the necessary preliminary for a general attack upon Wellington's line. While Ferey and Drouet had been making their last efforts, Marchand's and Mermet's divisions had been halted before the position of Picton's and Ashworth's troops, while Montbrun's cavalry was facing the 1st Division. Solignac was visible more to the rear, in front of Pozo Bello, acting as general reserve. The twenty-four guns belonging to these units[1] were all brought to the front, and cannonaded so much of the British line as was visible, doing some little harm. But they were gradually overpowered by the six batteries[2] which Wellington had brought up to his front, and finally ceased to fire. The infantry columns of Marchand and Mermet also suffered appreciably from the shot and shell, for they were well within range, though too far off for infantry fire to tell upon them[3]. It is clear that Masséna refused to attack the front of the 3rd and 1st Divisions till their flank should be turned on the Fuentes side, and since that necessary preliminary was never accomplished, the frontal assault was never delivered,

[1] Six guns of the cavalry, fourteen of the 6th Corps, four of the 8th Corps.

[2] Bull's horse artillery troop, Thompson's and Lawson's companies, and three Portuguese batteries, those of Sequeira, Rosado, and Preto.

[3] Fririon notes that they suffered more than was necessary from being in dense masses (p. 207). These two divisions had on the 3rd and 5th May 14 officers killed and 38 wounded, according to Martinien's lists. As the total loss of the corps on both days was 59 officers and nearly 900 men, and we have to allow for Ferey's loss of 400 men in Fuentes village, it seems that Marchand and Mermet must have lost at least as many more.

though three divisions stood ready to make it. The only move on this side, during the hours after noon, was that on the extreme left of the French line some voltigeurs, apparently from Mermet's division, were sent down into the ravine of the Turon, and tried to push up it, as if to turn the right flank of the Guards brigade. They were, however, soon stopped by five companies of the 95th Rifles, whom Craufurd had left to block the passage up this low-lying part of the British position; no serious attempt was made to reinforce the attack, which soon died down into a mere *tiraillade*.

Masséna's account of his reasons for refusing to commit himself to the decisive attack runs as follows in his dispatch to the Emperor: 'The English general had united in his centre very large forces and much artillery. I wished to try to pierce his centre, and to drive the English army towards the lower Coa. The spirit of the troops was admirable; but I had to assure myself, before making this vigorous blow, as to the state of my ammunition, for during the course of this campaign I had seen myself checked repeatedly by insurmountable difficulties. It resulted from the report which the officer commanding the artillery submitted to me, that there only remained in the reserve park four cartridges per man, which might give thirty shots, counting what was still in the men's cartridge-boxes. I did not think myself in a situation to recommence the attack with such a meagre supply, and decided to send all the empty caissons back to Rodrigo, in order to bring up more ammunition. Meanwhile I took the necessary measures to preserve the advantage already gained over the enemy [1].'

It is clear that we have not here the whole of the Marshal's motives explained. Granting that the reserve of cartridges had run low, the troops with which he had to deliver the decisive blow were precisely those who had still plenty of ammunition. Mermet's [2] and Solignac's divisions had not fired a shot; Marchand's had only been engaged for a few minutes in Pozo Bello, with the two battalions of the 7th Division which it had evicted

[1] Masséna to Napoleon, Fuentes de Oñoro, May 7: the main battle-report.

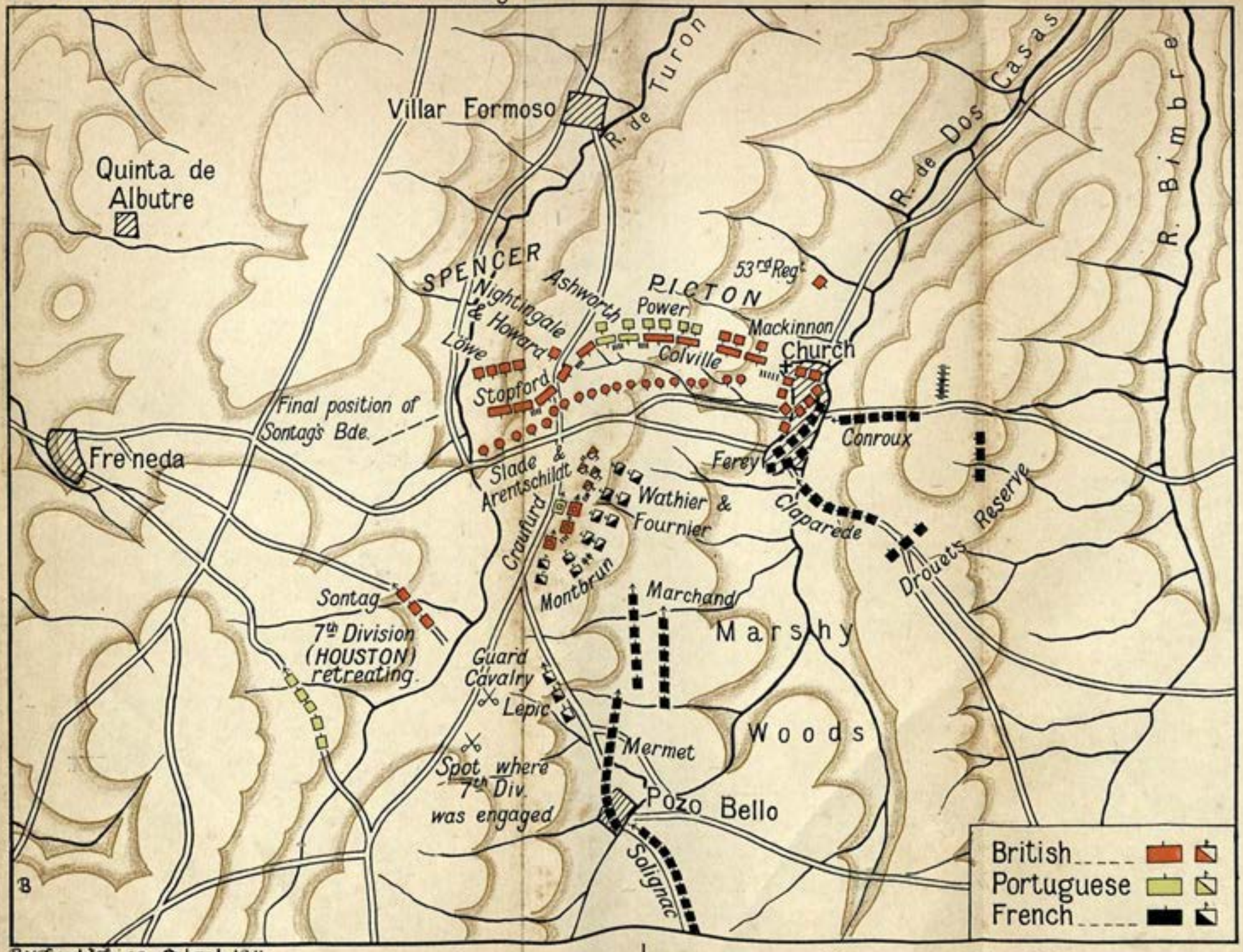
[2] Save the few voltigeur companies from Mermet sent down to skirmish with the 95th Rifles in the ravine of the Turon, as mentioned just above.

from that village. It is true that Ferey's, Claparède's, and Conroux's troops, which had made the successive attacks on Fuentes, must have been not only exhausted in morale but very short of ammunition by this moment. But why had not the attack by the three intact divisions been made before the troops to their right had been completely used up? Clearly because Masséna refused to deliver the frontal assault till the flanking movement had been successful, and Wellington's left-centre had been driven from the village. There were several hours about noon during which the troops of Marchand, Mermet, and Solignac remained halted in front of the allied line, while furious fighting was going on in Fuentes. If the Marshal did not let them loose upon the enemy during that long space of time, it was because he thought the attack hopeless. The explanation appears clearly enough in the narrative of his aide-de-camp Pelet: 'The Marshal came to the front when this sort of defile had become already impregnable; a *tiraillade* was already established; he threw himself off his horse, and, accompanied only by myself, walked several times up and down the front of the line, to look for a point where he could break in. But the whole position seemed equally strong; the fire of the enemy upon Fuentes, and the reinforcements which he had sent into the village, drew in that direction the bulk of the French divisions. Everything had come to turn upon the *affaire de poste* in that direction. It was necessary to force the village and the ravine at its back, where all the ground was in favour of the enemy. The day slipped by in vain attacks[1].'

If Masséna did not move his main body at noon, when the British were waging a doubtful contest in Fuentes, it would have been idle to strike after two o'clock, when the attack on the village had utterly failed. The fact was that he had staked everything on the capture of Fuentes, and had seen at an early hour that he dared not send forward Marchand, Mermet, and Solignac, till the village should have been taken and Wellington's flank turned. But though three divisions had been used up one after another against that strong post, they had failed to master it. The game was up; for to deliver the front attack when the flank attack had failed would have been hopeless.

[1] Pelet, *Appendice sur la Guerre d'Espagne*, p. 341.

FUENTES DE ONORO. May 5th 1811



B.V. Garbishire, Oxford, 1911

SCALE 1 ½ 0 1 2 ENGLISH MILES

The only chance that the Marshal had of success was to make the two attacks simultaneous: but he had such a respect for Wellington's main position that he would not assail it till it was turned. It never was turned, and so he never engaged the three divisions that were so long facing it. As a subsidiary reason for his refusal to strike home, we must undoubtedly add the fact that he had discovered that he was too weak in guns to make any proper artillery preparation for an attack on the British centre. In the course of a long duel his twenty-four pieces had been overpowered by the thirty-six which Wellington had placed over against them. They were badly mauled, and largely out of action, by the moment that the fighting in Fuentes village was over. If the infantry had advanced, it would have been shot to pieces by the victorious British artillery, before it could reach the crest of the strong position where the Anglo-Portuguese battalions lay ranged behind the sky-line.

On the northern flank of the British position, where the 5th Division, about Fort Concepcion, and the 6th Division in front of San Pedro, watched Reynier's corps across the steep ravine of the Dos Casas, nothing of importance happened throughout the day. The opposing forces were almost equal, each about 10,000 strong, and Reynier had been ordered to make no more than 'a general demonstration all along his line, to support the attack of the main army.' It was true that he was also directed to make a parallel movement along the river, if Wellington should draw in towards Fuentes de Oñoro the troops immediately opposed to him[1]. But this was never done: Wellington kept the 5th and 6th Divisions almost in their original positions throughout the day. A regiment from the latter (the 53rd)[2] was moved to the edge of the plateau at the north end of Fuentes village, to keep back any attempt to turn the place on that side—but such an attempt was not made, and

[1] Masséna's orders (*Archives de la Guerre*) were that Reynier 'fera pour seconder l'attaque de l'armée une démonstration générale sur la ligne, et suivra l'ennemi dans tous ses mouvements—c'est-à-dire que si les forces qu'il a devant lui se porteraient au secours du gros de l'armée ennemie, qui est dans la direction de Fuentes d'Oñoro, il les suivrait dans sa marche, pour les prendre par la gauche.'

[2] See Rogerson's regimental history of the 53rd, p. 58.

the rest of the division kept its original place opposite Reynier. The 'demonstration' which that general had been ordered to make was duly carried out, but amounted to nothing more than the sending of the 31st Léger and two guns from Heudelet's division to skirmish, at the edge of the ravine, with the light troops of the 5th Division on the other side[1]. Some more of the French regiments deployed, but never came within gunshot. The figures of the losses on the two sides show how little serious was the engagement: the 31st Léger lost 4 officers and 48 men killed or wounded; the light companies of the British 3/1st, 1/9th, 2/30th, and 2/44th, and of the Portuguese 8th Caçadores lost 27 men. The 6th Division had no losses at all in its British brigades, and only four men in the 12th Portuguese line. Reynier has been blamed by some French critics for not pushing forward a pronounced attack, but it is hard to see how he could have done more. He was ordered to demonstrate only, not to commit himself to a real action, unless the British should withdraw from his front and go towards Fuentes. And as Wellington kept 10,000 men in his front all day, covered by a difficult ravine, he would only have lost lives, and gained nothing, by engaging. The two divisions opposite him were numerically as strong as himself, and lay in a most formidable position. An attack would have been beaten off, while if he had manœuvred towards Fuentes to join Drouet, the 5th Division could have crossed the ravine and taken him in the rear. Such a movement would also have exposed the convoy intended for Almeida, which lay at Gallegos, to Reynier's left rear.

Thus ended the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro: the fight, which had been hot and well contested down to two o'clock, dying down into a mere skirmishing between outposts before dusk. The total losses of the 5th had been, on the part of the Allies, 1,452 officers and men, of whom 192 were killed, 958 wounded, and 255 taken prisoners. That of the French was 2,192, of whom 267 were killed, 1,878 wounded, and 47 prisoners. On

[1] The 8th Caçadores, according to Wellington's dispatch, partly crossed the ravine and fought on the other side. Note that he calls them the '2nd battalion Lusitanian Legion,' though that had now ceased to be their official designation.

both sides the larger half of the casualties was incurred in the street fighting that raged up and down the village of Fuentes for so many hours; as has been already explained, the Allies lost here 800 men, the French about 1,300. The remaining losses among Wellington's men are mainly accounted for by the hustling of the 7th Division about Pozo Bello, which cost 237 men, by the cutting up of the light troops of the Guards Brigade, where about 100 casualties took place, and by the hard fighting of the cavalry during the early part of the day, while they were covering the retreat of the Light and 7th Divisions, in which they lost 160 men. On the other side the French, besides their casualties in Fuentes village, had 359 officers and men of their cavalry put out of action, and some 400 of Marchand's and Mermet's infantry killed or hurt, partly in the storming of Pozo Bello, but mainly in the cannonade in the afternoon, while they were standing in column facing Wellington's second position, which they were never allowed to attack [1]. Of the 255 prisoners taken from the Allies, nearly 100 were lost about Pozo Bello by the 7th Division, and 94 belonged to the two companies of the 79th captured in Fuentes de Oñoro during Ferey's first attack. Undoubtedly the most surprising item in the statistics of the day is the small loss incurred by the Light Division during its retreat to the British lines, wherein, though beset by 3,000 cavalry and a battery of horse artillery, it counted only 67 casualties [2]. But steady infantry, such as the Light Division, was invulnerable even to the most daring horsemen, so long as it preserved its formation in square.

On the morning after the battle, dawn showed the two armies still holding their positions of the preceding night. Masséna had

[1] Marchand's division shows in Martinien's lists surprisingly heavy casualties, considering that it was but partially engaged on the 3rd in support of Ferey, and on the 5th was only actively employed in storming Pozo Bello. It had 13 officers killed and 31 wounded, which ought to imply at least 600 or 700 casualties among the rank and file. Apparently there was a disproportionate loss in officers, as the whole casualties of the 6th Corps on May 5 were only 944 men, of whom at least 400 were in Ferey's division.

[2] Only 9 hurt in the 43rd, 21 in the 52nd, 13 in the Rifles, 24 in the two Caçador battalions. And many of these were undoubtedly lost in skirmishing, not in the retreat in squares.

not drawn back, and the line of his pickets was still covering all the ground taken from the British on the 5th. The divisions were encamped close behind, Marchand's, Mermet's, and Solignac's in the edge of the wood on the near side of Pozo Bello, Ferey's, Conroux's, and Claparéde's on the heights facing Fuentes de Oñoro, Reynier's far away to the right. Nor had Wellington moved a man; but from several hours before daylight his troops had been employed in entrenching the new front that they had taken up. This was wellnigh the only occasion during the whole Peninsular War when Wellington used field-fortification on a large scale. A trench with the earth thrown outward was constructed from near Fuentes de Oñoro down to the banks of the Turon—a distance of over a mile. There was special protection for the six batteries of artillery distributed down the front, and a great *abattis* blocking the ravine of the Turon. The village of Villar Formoso on that stream, somewhat to the rear of the line, and that of Freneda, on the extreme right, where the 7th Division lay, had also been put in a state of defence.

Masséna, having failed when the enemy was maintaining a hastily assumed position, had no intention of attacking it when it was entrenched. In his dispatch of the 7th he writes: 'The enemy has passed the night after the battle in fortifying the crest of the plateau which he occupies. There are five large works, much artillery is visible, and trenches for the firing line. He has put up *épaulements* in the ravines and behind the rocks; he has barricaded the upper part of Fuentes de Oñoro village, and Villaformosa; thus he has called to his aid all the resources of fortifications against an attack that must be made by main force.' The idea of relieving Almeida had vanished from the Marshal's mind—as is sufficiently marked by the fact that he ordered the great convoy at Gallegos, which had been collected for throwing into the fortress, to be distributed for the daily necessities of the army, which would otherwise have had to be fed by provisions sent forward from Ciudad Rodrigo. In his report of the battle he states that his intention is now to withdraw the garrison of Almeida, if he can manage it, and to have the place blown up. There is no prospect of dislodging the allied army by a second general engagement; but, by

manœuvring, an opportunity of bringing off Brennier and his men may be secured. The primary object of the campaign is therefore abandoned; but the new secondary object of saving the garrison of Almeida may possibly be secured. In this, as we shall see, the Marshal was to succeed, owing to the culpable negligence of some of Wellington's subordinates. The main purpose of the expedition of the Army of Portugal had been foiled; after the battle the idea of retaining Almeida, as a foothold beyond the frontier, was given up.

Fuentes de Oñoro has been called the most hazardous of all Wellington's fights, and he has often been censured for fighting at all. Success is not always the best criterion of a general's dispositions, and in this case the fact that Masséna was foiled is not enough to vindicate all his adversary's arrangements. But when the case against Wellington is stated by critics like Napier, Fririon, or Pelet, it is necessary to set forth his defence, which seems an adequate one. Napier blames his old chief for accepting battle. 'A mistaken notion of Masséna's sufferings during the late retreat induced Wellington to undertake two operations at the same time[1], which was above his strength, and this error might have been his ruin, for Bessières, who only brought 1,500 cavalry and six guns to the battle of Fuentes Oñoro, might have brought 10,000 men and sixteen guns.' He erred in sending out Houston's division to Pozo Bello, and so extending his line to an unwieldy length, across ground which, beyond Fuentes, was suitable for cavalry and lacked defensive strength. By engaging the 7th and Light Divisions on this *terrain* he gave the enemy 'great advantages, which Napoleon would have made fatal.' He took up a position which would have allowed Masséna to detach some of his numerous squadrons round his right flank, by the Sabugal and Sequeiro bridges, to destroy his magazines at Guarda and Celorico, break his communication, and cut up the transport in the rear of the allied army. But, says Napier, 'with an overwhelming cavalry on suitable ground, the Prince of Essling merely indicated, as it were, the English general's errors, and stopped short when he should have sprung forward.'

To this it may be answered, firstly, that Wellington would not have fought, if Bessières had brought 10,000 men instead of

[1] The blockade of Almeida and the siege of Badajoz by Beresford.

the two cavalry brigades which actually accompanied him. He states in his dispatch to Lord Liverpool of May 1st that he is prepared to abandon the blockade of Almeida 'if the enemy have such a superiority of force as to render the result of contest for that point doubtful.' He also states that he is aware that Masséna might be reinforced by detachments of the troops under Bessières, which would include some of the Imperial Guard. On May 2nd[1] his intelligence through Spanish sources was sufficiently good to enable him to know that very little of the Army of the North had actually moved. If one or both of the Guard infantry divisions had marched for the frontier a week before the campaign began, it is perfectly certain that he must have heard of it, for such a force would have taken long to advance from Valladolid to Ciudad Rodrigo, or still longer from Burgos to Ciudad Rodrigo. There were secret agents at Salamanca and most of the other towns of the Douro valley, who would certainly have taken care that such a piece of information should reach the hands of Wellington. He fought because he was aware that the force opposed to him practically consisted of the Army of Portugal alone. It will be remembered that, before his short visit to the Alemtejo in April, he gave Sir Brent Spencer elaborate directions as to the position which he was to take up, in case the French should come in overwhelming force to relieve Almeida during his own absence. Spencer was directed to leave the road open, and to draw back to a defensive position covering the allied lines of communication[2]. And this no doubt is the policy which Wellington would have adopted, if Bessières had brought up the infantry of the Imperial Guard to Masséna's help. Of this the best proof is that he actually followed this plan in September, at the time of the El Bodon fighting, when Dorsenne, Bessières's successor, came up to the help of the Army of Portugal with a large force.

Napier's second criticism is of more validity. The placing of the 7th Division at Pozo Bello did extend the front of the army into indefensible ground. But, as has already been pointed out, Wellington's intention was not to fight with the 7th Division in such a position, if the enemy made a wide flanking movement with a very large force. Houston's battalions and their cavalry

[1] *Dispatches*, vii. 515.

[2] See p. 298 above.

supports were to guard against any attempt to turn Fuentes de Oñoro by a mere detachment, operating on a short circle. For this the force sufficed: that, though it was assailed by three infantry divisions and 3,000 cavalry, it came off with a loss of only 400 men, and assumed the new position allotted to it in due course, is surely a testimony to the fundamental soundness of Wellington's tactics. Flanking detachments must withdraw if hopelessly outnumbered; but that is no reason for saying that such detachments must never be made. Montbrun's cavalry sought every possible opportunity to act against the 7th and Light Divisions, but had no success save in the one case where they caught two battalions in scattered fragments evacuating a village—even there, owing to the splendid succour afforded by the British cavalry, they did not destroy the unlucky troops, but only cut up 150 of them. The moral is the old one, that cavalry unsupported is helpless against a steady force of all arms, even when it is in movement over open ground. Inferior though the British horsemen were in number, they gave an invaluable support to the infantry, which was never seriously incommoded during its retreat.

But, it is urged [1], the Light and 7th Divisions might have been in great peril if Marchand's and Mermet's infantry had followed Montbrun's cavalry with all speed, and pursued the retiring British, instead of drawing up in front of Wellington's left centre, to the south of Fuentes village. Masséna seems to contradict the possibility of this in his dispatch, where he says that 'the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the 6th Corps followed the movement of the cavalry *as much as it was possible for infantry in column to do*,' and again: 'This superb movement [of the cavalry] was stopped; and *before our infantry could arrive* the enemy had the time to cover the crest of his plateau with several lines of English infantry and a formidable force of artillery [2].' It seems probable that there was actually not time for Marchand and Mermet, coming out by narrow swampy paths from the woods of Pozo Bello [3], and forced to get into order in

[1] Both by Napier, iii. 152, and by Fririon, p. 207.

[2] See his dispatch in the Appendix to Belmas, i. p. 539.

[3] Moreover, Marchand's leading brigade, that of Maucune, must have been in great disorder, after having driven the British advanced guard out of the woods and the village, and would need time to re-form.

the open ere they could move on, to catch up Craufurd and Houston before they were safe in their appointed positions. Moreover, if they had hurried after Montbrun they would have been making a flank march across the front of Wellington's new line, and exposing themselves to the possibility of a ruinous counter-stroke, like that delivered at Salamanca a year later.

Apparently then, on Masséna's own showing, the advance of Montbrun was too rapid for the infantry to join him, and if so, the dismal picture drawn by Napier of the cavalry and the Light Division overwhelmed by a combination of Montbrun and Marchand, and hurled in disorder against the 1st Division in its position on the plateau, must be overdrawn. It is rash to criticize Wellington as a tactician, when (as in this case) he was moving troops under his own eye, on ground where calculations of time and pace were simple. If, from his commanding position on the edge of the plateau, he had judged that the French infantry were close enough to Montbrun to give him effective support, he certainly would not have sent out Craufurd to succour Houston, but would have allowed the latter to make the best retreat that he could towards the Turon and Freneda. But Wellington evidently judged that the 7th Division could be brought off without too much risk, and he knew that Craufurd and his veterans could be trusted even in the most delicate situations. No amount of cavalry could harm them, and if the French infantry were far enough away, the operation would be in reality much less hazardous than it looked.

When once the Light and 7th Divisions had got to their appointed places in the new line, it is hard to see that Masséna could have done anything against Wellington's front, which was well established on a commanding ground, with a steep slope in front, and a superior artillery ranged along the crest. The Marshal himself, as we have seen, after inspecting the new position in person, thought that Fuentes village was the crucial point, and had turned three divisions against it. Undoubtedly, if he could have taken it, the position of the Allies would have been much altered for the worse. But it was a very strong post—as is sufficiently shown by the fact that 4,000 men held it against nearly double numbers for six or seven hours. Indeed, its importance may be compared with that of Hougoumont in the

battle of Waterloo—it forced the attacking party to use up a disproportionate number of men against an outwork, whose occupation was absolutely necessary as a preliminary for the general attack which was contemplated. The infantry of the French left could not assail the 1st and 3rd Divisions with any reasonable prospect of success till Fuentes was carried, and, as it was never carried, the attack could not be delivered.

As to Napier's suggestion that Masséna might have used some of his superabundant cavalry for a raid against the Sequeiro and Sabugal bridges, and the communications of the allied army, it is clear that the move was feasible, but there is no reason to suppose that it would have been effective. The moment that the force—say a couple of brigades—got to the Coa it would have been in the narrow and difficult roads of the mountains—liable to be stopped by the breaking of the first bridge, or the barricading of the road by the first bands of Ordenança that it ran against. Cavalry raids to the rear may be effective in the plains, but in a country like northern Portugal they are of very doubtful expediency. The military historian will remember how fruitless in the end were all the brilliant expeditions of J. E. B. Stuart and Morgan in the American Civil War; though they did much damage to trains and convoys, they had practically no effect on the general results of the campaign. Moreover, any expedition to places so remote as Celorico or Guarda would have taken many days, and Masséna had no time to waste; considerations of supply pressed him to make a speedy end to the campaign. On the whole, Napier's criticism seems unconvincing on this point.

As to Pelet's and Fririon's and Delagrave's carpings at Wellington, they seem to be based on a radical ignorance of the force which he had at his disposal. He may be proved as rash or as timid as the critic pleases, if it is presupposed that he had 50,000 men, as some French writers assert, or horsemen superior in numbers to his enemy, as others have the face to set forth [1]. If the allied army had possessed an adequate cavalry,

[1] Pelet thinks that 'l'excessive supériorité du général anglais lui donnait le moyen de tout entreprendre. Il s'est montré, dans cette campagne, et même ailleurs, fort étranger à la stratégie comme à la tactique.' He concludes that Wellington with his superior numbers

or two infantry divisions more than it actually contained, we may be sure that the fight would have taken a very different aspect. It was the balance of numbers which forced Wellington to assume a purely defensive position. The critic who urges that Masséna might have left the 2nd and 9th Corps alone in front of the allied position, and have marched with 15,000 men of the 6th and 8th Corps on Castello Bom, taking Freneda on the way, is perhaps the most unreasonable of all—for he would have had the Marshal divide his forces into two groups separated from each other by many miles, with nothing to close the gap. This would surely have led to prompt disaster. It is clear that Wellington could have overwhelmed the containing force, or have crushed the turning force, at his choice. This plan ignores the serious chance of a counter-attack on the part of the British general—a possibility which does indeed seem to have escaped the imaginations of many a French general down to the day of Salamanca. It was deeply rooted in their minds that he was a fighter on the defensive; they had yet to learn that when the chance was given him he could be as formidable on the offensive.

should have attacked the French centre or Reynier! He was 'plus fort des deux cinquièmes que les Français.' (*Appendice sur la Guerre d'Espagne*, pp. 340-2.) Fririon states as an incontestable fact that the French cavalry was inferior to the English in numbers (*Journal historique de la Campagne de Portugal*, p. 207). Marbot, on the other hand, thinks that Wellington was over rash in fighting at all on such a position (*Mémoires*, ii. 460), coming to much the same conclusion as Napier. Belmas's arguments, like those of Pelet, are all vitiated by his giving Wellington 45,000 men—9,000 more than he actually possessed. Delagrave thinks, like Pelet, that Wellington showed 'timidity which passed into cowardice.' Yet he allows that Masséna had 41,000 infantry and cavalry, without counting gunners or sappers, and Wellington only 40,000 (p. 239).

SECTION XXVI: CHAPTER IV

BRENNIER'S ESCAPE FROM ALMEIDA

The 6th of May went by without any sign of movement on the part of the French. Wellington watched with anxiety for the indications of an extension of the enemy's front to north or south. But not even a cavalry picket was shown to the right of Nava de Aver, or to the left of Fort Concepcion; reconnaissance on the flank showed that the French remained concentrated in their old positions. It was clearly improbable that Masséna was about to risk another frontal attack: and if, as was more likely, he was intending to try some other way of reaching Almeida than that which runs through Fuentes de Oñoro, it was odd that he should not start upon it at once. On the 8th, however, it became obvious that the enemy considered himself beaten, and was already retreating; at dawn it was found that the 6th and 9th Corps had disappeared from in front of Fuentes de Oñoro and the entrenched position to its right. Only part of the 2nd Corps was still keeping its ground in front of Alameda. The columns of Drouet and Loison were detected by exploring officers in the woods towards Espeja and Gallegos; Reynier was acting as a covering force to protect their withdrawal, and would have vanished at once if he had been attacked in force.

Masséna, in fact, had only lingered on the fighting-ground during the 6th and 7th in order to organize his retreat. He had ordered the great convoy of food, which had been brought up to Gallegos, to be distributed among the corps, since there was no longer any hope of throwing it into Almeida, and had sent back his artillery caissons to Rodrigo to be refilled. They were not to return, as he intended to pick them up during his retreat. But the main reason why the army had remained near Fuentes for two days was that an effort had been made

to communicate with General Brennier by stealth, since force had not availed. By offering a reward of 6,000 francs, the Marshal had succeeded in finding three soldiers who volunteered to attempt to pass through the British lines by night bearing a cipher dispatch. Chance has preserved their names, Zaniboni, Lami, and Tillet. The first two disguised themselves as Spanish peasants, but were both detected and shot as spies. The third, a private in the 6th Léger, retained his uniform and crawled for some miles down the bed of the Dos Casas ravine in the dark, only emerging from it when he got some way beyond Fort Concepcion. From thence he made his way to Almeida before dawn, by creeping on all fours though fields of corn. The dispatch which he bore to the governor directed him to evacuate the place and escape as best he could; he was recommended to try a northerly line, and to make for the bridge of Barba del Puerco, where Reynier's corps was to be placed from the 8th onward. By taking this route he would avoid the main body of the allied army, as there seemed to be nothing but cavalry vedettes north of Fort Concepcion. Brennier was instructed to acknowledge the receipt of the message, by firing three heavy salvos at five minutes' intervals from his heaviest guns at 10 o'clock at night. This he did, and it was their sound which enabled Masséna to retreat during the dark hours which followed, with a knowledge that his orders had been received and that the garrison would try to escape. During the next day (May 8th) the 6th and 9th Corps recrossed the Azava and retired to Ciudad Rodrigo. Reynier with the 2nd Corps, moving later, and taking a separate route, marched by the bridge of Barba del Puerco, further down the Agueda, and placed himself at San Felices, just beyond the stream.

Wellington, on seeing the French fall back to their point of starting, thought that Almeida and its garrison were now his own—and so they should have been if his subordinates had acted with common ability. He pushed forward his advanced posts to the Azava and the Agueda in face of the retiring enemy, but sent back the whole 6th Division to relieve Pack's Portuguese in the task of blockading Almeida. General Campbell took over the command from Pack on the 10th, and disposed his three brigades round the place in what he considered a

satisfactory and scientific fashion. It appears, however, that he cantoned them, for convenience sake, much too far out, and neglected the usual precaution of pushing pickets close up to the walls every night, to watch the garrison during the dark hours. The regiments were placed in villages three or four miles from the town, and the connecting screen of pickets between them was thin. Pack's Portuguese were moved by Campbell to Cinco Villas, four miles north-west of Almeida. Of Burne's brigade the 2nd regiment was nearest Almeida, on the road that goes out towards the north, the 36th at Malpartida close by. The other British brigade (Hulse's) was facing the south side of the fortress at a considerable distance; the Portuguese of the division (Madden's brigade) were at or near Junca on the east front.

Brennier was determined to do his very best to carry out the dangerous task which had been set him. Not only would he carry off his garrison, but he would leave Almeida a wreck behind him. The 8th and 9th of May were employed in driving mines into the whole of the enceinte, and in disabling as much of the artillery as was possible in the time. Some of the pieces were merely spiked, others had their bores choked also; many were disabled by the ingenious plan of firing several pairs of guns simultaneously, with the muzzles of some placed at right angles to those of the others, so that while half the shots flew outwards, the other half struck and disabled the guns against which they were aimed. The besiegers had detected that there was something odd in these salvos, but thought that they were signals to Masséna—as indeed the firing on the night of the 7th had actually been.

At about 11.30 on the night of the 10th, the French came out of the north gate of Almeida in two columns, one formed of the battalion of the 82nd Line, the other of the provisional battalion, artillery, and sappers who formed the larger half of the garrison, which numbered something over 1,300 men. The two columns, which marched close together, parallel with each other, struck the cordon of the blockading line near the point where the pickets of the 1st Portuguese, belonging to Pack's brigade, joined with those of the 2nd Queen's of Burne's. Rushing violently on, they pierced the line, with nothing more than a splutter of musketry from the few Portuguese sentries imme-

diately opposed to them, who were trampled down or driven off. Five minutes after, a tremendous series of explosions from Almeida startled the whole of the blockading force: the mines left behind by Brennier had worked, and the greater part of the eastern and northern fronts of the place had been blown up. On the south side something had gone wrong with the fuses, and little damage was done: but the fortress was effectively ruined.

Brennier should have been caught if the officers entrusted with the blockade had shown ordinary wisdom, for he was plunging into the midst of 6,000 men, and, if Wellington's orders had been properly carried out, he could never have reached his destination. The main blame for his successful evasion seems to rest on the shoulders of Colonel Iremonger of the Queen's regiment, and General Erskine. The former, who was nearest of all the blockading battalions to the point of Brennier's exit, merely put his men under arms, and sent out patrols both towards Almeida and to right and left. They came back after long delay, reporting that the town seemed to have been evacuated, and that the French had apparently got off to the north and were out of sight. Even at dawn Colonel Iremonger had made no movement, yet his battalion of all the division had the best chance of pursuing the enemy. Erskine's responsibility is still heavier: he had been directed by a written order, on the afternoon of the 10th, to extend the line of the 4th Division as far as the bridge of Barba del Puerco, and in particular to send the 4th regiment under Colonel Bevan to the rocky defile which overhangs that bridge.[1] Having, apparently, received

[1] Wellington says (to Lord Liverpool, May 15): 'Sir W. Erskine was dining with Sir Brent Spencer at head quarters, and received his orders about 4 o'clock. He says that he sent them off forthwith to the 4th regiment, which was stationed between Aldea de Obispo and Barba del Puerco. . . . The 4th regiment, it is said, did not receive their orders before midnight, and, though they had only 2½ miles to march, missed the road, and did not arrive at Barba del Puerco till after the French.' (*Dispatches*, vii. 566.) Tomkinson's contemporary comment on this is (pp. 102–3 of his diary): 'The order reached Sir W. Erskine's quarters about 2 p.m.: he put it in his pocket, and did not dispatch the letter to Colonel Bevan before midnight, and to cover himself, when required to explain by Lord Wellington, said that the 4th unfortunately missed its

the dispatch at four o'clock, he detained it (unopened according to some accounts) till long after dusk, when he forwarded directions to the 4th regiment to move to Barba del Puerco. Colonel Bevan, not receiving the order till late at night, took upon himself the responsibility of ordering that the battalion should only move at daybreak. Wherefore there were no troops holding the defile at the critical moment.

For the first few miles of his retreat Brennier was followed only by General Pack, who had caught up eighty men of the main picket of the 1st Portuguese, and hurried after the retreating columns, after sending word to Campbell at Malpartida of the enemy's general direction. Pack kept up a running fire for several hours, and took many stragglers and all the French baggage; but, by the orders of their commander, the retreating columns did not wait to beat off the teasing force which pursued them, or even fire a shot in return. Towards daybreak Pack found himself near Villa de Ciervo, with only a major and eleven men left in his company, but still close on the heels of the French. In this village there was a troop of the 1st Royals, watching the line of the Agueda; they turned out on hearing the firing, demonstrated against the flying enemy, and detained him for a few useful minutes; but fifty dragoons could do nothing against two battalion columns. However, with the growing light, more British troops were seen hurrying up. General Campbell, on getting Pack's message, had come on rapidly with the 36th regiment from Malpartida, and was within a mile of Brennier, when the latter turned down to the defile which leads to the bridge of Barba del Puerco. At the same time the 4th, so unhappily absent up to this moment, were perceived approaching from the south, parallel with the course of the Agueda, while a squadron of Barbaçena's dragoons and some Portuguese infantry were visible in a north-westerly direc-

way, which was *not* the case.' Many years later (1836) in his *Conversations with Lord Stanhope* (which see, p. 89) Wellington said that he believed Bevan had his orders 'about four or five in the afternoon, but the people about him said "Oh! you need not march till daybreak," and so by his fault the French got to Barba del Puerco.' Napier (*History*, iii. p. 156) says plainly that 'Erskine sent no order to the 4th regiment.' Colonel Bevan always maintained that he got nothing from Erskine till nearly midnight.

tion. If Brennier had allowed himself to be detained for half an hour longer, at any moment in his retreat, he would have been a lost man. But, as it was, his leading column was nearing the bridge before the British got within touch of him.

General Campbell had ordered the 36th to throw off their packs and run, when he saw how close the French were to safety, and the regiment, followed by the 4th, which came up a minute later, struck the second French column just as it was descending to the bridge. Fired upon and charged on the steep road, the battalion broke, and many men, trying to find short cuts down the precipitous hillside, lost their footing, and fell down the rocks. There were some broken necks and many broken limbs, while other fugitives fell into the river and were drowned. Meanwhile a heavy fire was opened on the pursuers from the opposite bank. Reynier, who (as he had been ordered) kept a good watch on the bridge from San Felices, had sent down three battalions of the 31st Léger and some guns to receive the flying garrison. They had lined the bank, and were ready to defend the defile. Colonel Cochrane, of the 36th, without Campbell's orders, took upon himself to try to force a passage through the covering force, and led a mixed mass of his own regiment and the 4th across the bridge, and up the opposite slope. They were repulsed with loss by the 31st Léger; the casualties in this rash enterprise were the only ones suffered by the British that morning, and amounted to eighteen killed and wounded, and an officer and sixteen men taken prisoners. Pack's Portuguese had lost some fifteen men when their picket line was forced at midnight, so that the total casualties of the Allies were about fifty.

Brennier's columns had of course suffered far more—but it was a scandal that a single man had escaped. He states his loss in his report to Marmont at 360 men out of 1,300, of whom over 200 were prisoners and 150 killed or wounded. The *commandant de place* of Almeida and twelve other officers were taken. Reynier says that when General Campbell had withdrawn his troops from the water's edge, and up the cliff, out of the range of the French cannon, he sent a party across the bridge to bring in the wounded, and that they found quite a heap of men with broken limbs at the foot of the precipice,

whom they dragged out from among the dead and brought back with them. There were some few English and Portuguese in this ghastly pile, who had lost their footing in reckless pursuit of the flying enemy and had fallen with them[1].

Wellington gave it as his opinion that the escape of the garrison of Almeida was 'the most disgraceful military event' that had yet occurred to the British army in the Peninsula, and it is easy to understand his wrath. Campbell had been warned that Brennier might very probably attempt to escape; Erskine had been told to guard the defile of Barba del Puerco. The former kept his troops too far back from the place, and so disposed them that there was nothing directly behind the cordon of pickets, at the point where Brennier broke out, save the main-guard of the 1st Portuguese. He also watched the south and west sides of Almeida with unnecessary numbers—for it was unlikely that the governor would choose either of those points for his sortie. But he clearly did his best to pursue when the alarm came, and was the first to appear at Barba del Puerco with the 36th. The colonel of the 2nd regiment was much more to blame than his chief, since he was close to the original point where the French appeared, but merely collected his battalion at its head quarters and made no attempt to pursue. In his exculpatory letter to General Campbell he 'thinks that he has explained everything satisfactorily[2],' but he clearly does not show that he made an adequate attempt to face the situation, which demanded a rapid pursuit. An extraordinary chance happened to another regiment of the 6th Division: Colonel Douglas, with the 8th Portuguese, was at Junca, some way to the east of Almeida. He started off at the first alarm, and with proper military instinct marched for Barba del Puerco. Having good guides he reached the bridge before daybreak, but could see nothing of Brennier (who was still some miles away near Villa de Ciervo). Finding the defile all quiet, and no French visible save Reynier's cavalry picket on the other side of the

[1] Marbot's well-known narrative of this disaster (ii. 473) errs in exaggerating the numbers, but Reynier's dispatch shows that there was a solid foundation for what might otherwise have appeared a rather lurid picture.

[2] Colonel Iremonger to Campbell, printed in *History of the 2nd Regt.*, vol. iii. p. 190.

water, he concluded that he had come upon the wrong track, and turned back across the Dos Casas to look for the garrison elsewhere[1]. If he had been a trifle less prompt, he would have found Brennier running into his arms. This was sheer bad luck. But clearly the main blame lay with Erskine, who kept an important order back for six or seven hours, and was the person directly responsible for the fact that the bridge of Barba del Puerco was not watched, according to the precise direction issued by the Commander-in-Chief.

Wellington summed up the affair in a confidential letter to his brother[2] with the bitter words: 'I begin to be of the opinion that there is nothing so stupid as "a gallant officer." They (the blockading force) had about 13,000 men[3] to watch 1,400, and on the night of the 10th, to the infinite surprise of the enemy, they allowed the garrison to slip through their fingers and escape. . . . There they were, sleeping in their spurs even, but the French got off.' The two officers who bore the brunt of their chief's wrath were not—as might have been expected—Erskine and Iremonger, but Cochrane and Bevan. The former, for his ill-advised attempt to cross the bridge, got a withering rebuke in a general order. The latter found that his statement that Erskine's dispatch did not reach him till midnight was disbelieved: threatened with being brought before a court of inquiry, he committed suicide at Portalegre, while the army was on its march to the south a few weeks later. Public opinion in the army held that he had been sacrificed to the hierarchical theory that a general must be believed before a lieutenant-colonel[4].

[1] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, vii. p. 566.

[2] *Supplementary Dispatches*, vii. p. 123.

[3] Counting the 4th Division, which was hardly, however, part of the 'blockading force.'

[4] For statements showing that every one believed Erskine to be the responsible person see Stepney, p. 105: 'instead of promulgating the orders the general, it is said, put them in his pocket and forgot them.' George Simmons (p. 174): 'Bevan was too late owing to Sir W. Erskine, by accident, not sending him an order in time.' Charles Napier (*Diary*, p. 173), 'It is said that Sir Wm. Erskine is to blame, and next to him General Campbell.'

It will have been noted that Brennier's report of his hazardous exploit, for which Napoleon very deservedly promoted him to the rank of general of division, was sent in, not to Masséna but to Marmont. The Prince of Essling had ceased to command the Army of Portugal a few hours before the explosion at Almeida. It will be remembered that the Emperor had made up his mind to supersede the old Marshal on April 20, and had entrusted the dispatch to General Foy, who (travelling with his usual headlong speed) reached Ciudad Rodrigo on the afternoon of May 10th. Marmont, who declares that he had no idea that he was to take over any charge greater than that of the 6th Corps, had reached Rodrigo two days before, and had reported his arrival to Masséna when the latter entered the fortress on May 8th. When Foy delivered the fatal dispatch to his old chief, the latter vented himself in loud outbursts of wrath, and declared that he had been maligned to the Emperor [1]. He accused Foy of having given an ill account of his late campaign to their master, and so of having caused his fall. And he added insult to injury by pointing out that the envelope of the dispatch was torn, and insinuating that the bearer had picked it open, in order to read its contents on his journey. Aghast at these accusations, which seem to have been no more than the angry inspirations of the moment, Foy wrote a long letter of remonstrance and self-justification to the Marshal, but got no satisfaction thereby. Masséna's own character was such that it was natural for him to suspect double dealing and dishonourable conduct on the part of others. The reasons which probably brought about his recall at this particular moment have been explained in an earlier chapter [2]. They were the Emperor's verdict on the campaign of Portugal. His lieutenant had failed and had lost the confidence of his army, therefore he must be recalled. Masséna had done far more than any other general could have accomplished, and he had, in effect, been sent to essay the impossible. His master far more than himself was responsible for the failure; but this the Emperor could not, or perhaps would not, see. The recall was now necessary,

[1] See Foy's *Vie Militaire*, p. 114, and Appendix no. 49.

[2] See pp. 295-6 above.

for the old Marshal's bolt was shot, and it was clear that after Fuentes de Oñoro he could not have got any more good work out of his army.

His successor, Marmont, was a far younger man, aged only thirty-six, and promoted to his marshalship so late as 1809. He was one of Napoleon's earliest followers, and had seen his first service under him as lieutenant of artillery at Toulon. Having fought all through the Italian campaign of 1796–7, he had followed his chief to Egypt, and had been one of the few officers selected to accompany him in his surreptitious return to France in 1799. He had served in the campaigns of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram, but not in the Prusso-Russian War of 1806–7, during which he had been acting as Governor of Dalmatia. It was his good service both as general and organizer in that province which had won him his Illyrian title of 'Duke of Ragusa.' Personally Marmont was the exact antithesis of his predecessor in command: he was no rough and unscrupulous adventurer, but a well-educated and cultured gentleman, whose ancestors had served the old monarchy in the army and the law. Of all the marshals, he and St. Cyr are the only two whose writings give the impression of real literary ability. His autobiography displays his character in all its strength and weakness; it shows him brilliant, active, ingenious, and plausible, but absurdly vain and self-satisfied. The Spanish chapters of it form one of the best and most convincing indictments of Napoleon's policy in the Peninsula, and he supports every deduction by original documents in the true historical method. But he is such a whole-hearted admirer of himself and his achievements that he can never realize his own faults and failures. Nothing that he ever did was wrong—even the loss of the battle of Salamanca, entirely his own work, can be shifted on to the shoulders of his subordinates. And he has no sympathy and admiration for any other person in the world. As a bitter critic remarked at the time of the publication of his bulky memoirs, 'Marmont is not only autolatrous, but his autolatry is exclusive and intolerant. Many conceited men are not incapable of recognizing merit in others; they can adjust themselves to their equals and respect them. Marmont gets irritated and angry whenever he runs against another man of parts. He

is a self-lover who has become a general misanthrope; the iconoclast of the reputations of all other notable persons.'

But Marmont's jealousy was reserved for those who were important enough to be considered as rivals. To his subordinates and inferiors he was kindly and considerate in a patronizing sort of manner. The diarists who served under him speak with amusement rather than anger of his grand airs, his elaborate parade and pomp, and the ostentatious splendour of his field equipage [1]. He was clearly not disliked as Masséna had been, for he took care of his men as well as of himself, and was not considered a hard master [2].

The military capacity of this clever, vain, ostentatious young marshal has often been under-valued. He was an excellent strategist, who could grasp and face a situation with firmness and rapidity. He could form a good plan of campaign, and manœuvre his troops skilfully, as was sufficiently shown in his movements in June 1811 and July 1812. As an organizer he cannot be too highly praised: the way in which he refitted the Army of Portugal within a month of Fuentes, and made it efficient for a long and difficult march across central Spain, was deserving of the highest approval. His weak point was in tactical execution. When he had got his army to the striking point, he was seized with irresolution, which contrasted strangely with the skill and decision which he had shown up to that moment. In personal courage he was the equal of any of his colleagues—but he could not keep a clear head on a battle morning. Foy, who served under him during the whole of his command in Spain, sums him up as follows in his diary: 'Bold and enterprising till the moment of danger, he suddenly becomes cold and apathetic when the armies are in presence. In discussion he will not face the difficulty, but tries to evade it. He is a good, estimable,

[1] 'Son tapis chargé de pâtés et d'autres pièces froides très belles, servis sur des plats d'argent, était entouré d'assiettes, de gobelets, de couverts du même métal. On dîna debout — ce qui ne suffit pas pour donner à ce repas de luxe un caractère suffisamment militaire.' Thiébault, iv. p. 514.

[2] Parquin, who served for some time in his escort squadron, calls him 'très aimé pour les soins qu'il prenait du soldat' (*Mémoires*, p. 298), and rather admires him for having nothing but silver plate with him when on campaign.

and respectable man, but he himself (and many others) have been entirely deceived as to the value of his talents. He was never born to be the general of an army. His face expresses too faithfully the hesitation of his mind. He asks advice too often, too publicly, and of too many persons. A witty friend said to me in 1806: "Marmont is like Mont Cenis: in good weather his brow is high and imposing, in times of storm the clouds wrap it completely round[1].' . . . Yet so mobile is his imagination that, when the crisis is over, he forgets all his indecision and mental anguish, he effaces from his memory past facts, and turns to his profit and glory all that has happened, even events that were unfortunate and disgraceful[2].'

Marmont had commanded an army corps with credit; he had even conducted a little campaign of his own against the Austrians on the Dalmatian frontier, in 1809, so as to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. But he was very far from being fit to contend with Wellington, who was as good a strategist as himself and a practical tactician of a very different class of merit. He lacked both the imperturbable coolness and the iron resolution of his opponent—and the first time that they met in serious combat he was 'found out,' and dashed to destruction.

Meanwhile Marmont's first seven weeks of command were infinitely creditable to him. He reorganized the Army of Portugal with a rapidity that disarranged Wellington's calculations, and he led it to the strategical point where it was needed, with great swiftness and skill—as we shall presently see.

The Emperor, in the dispatch which explained to Marmont his duties, had bidden him drop the organization into corps on which the Army of Portugal had been hitherto formed, and send home the superfluous corps-commanders, and any other generals whose absence he desired more than their presence. Such advice squared with the Duke of Ragusa's own ideas, for he disliked to have about him officers who were too high in rank and seniority to be his humble assistants. Junot and Loison went back to France at once, and with them nearly all the old divisional generals: Marmont worked the army with promoted brigadiers. We hear for the future nothing more of many

[1] Foy's *Vie Militaire*, p. 171.

[2] Ibid., p. 177, note (1).

familiar names—Marchand, Merle, Mermet, Heudelet, &c. Of the old divisional commanders only Clausel and Solignac remained. The rest of the new divisions, into which the old corps were redistributed, were given to men who had entered Portugal in 1810 at the head of brigades only—Ferey, Brennier, Sarrut, Foy, Maucune. Reynier stopped a few months more with the army and went off in July, there being no place for him in the new system. Of the old superior officers only Montbrun, commanding all the cavalry, remained with Marmont till the end of the campaign of 1811—there was no one who could be substituted for him in command of that arm.

In the reorganization of the army the old regimental association in brigades and divisions were mainly adhered to. The two senior divisions of the 6th Corps (Marchand's and Mermet's original commands) simply became the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Army of Portugal, under Foy and Clausel. The two divisions of the 2nd Corps (late Merle's and Heudelet's) became the 4th and 3rd Divisions of the new organization, under Sarrut and Ferey[1]. The 8th Corps and Loison's original division of the 6th Corps were amalgamated, and made into the 5th and 6th Divisions (Maucune and Brennier). A few small abnormal units, such as the Légion du Midi and the Hanoverian Legion, horse and foot, were disbanded, and ceased to exist. All the isolated fourth battalions of the old 8th Corps had gone down to skeleton units of 200 or 300 strong—their rank and file were drafted into other regiments, their cadres sent home to France to recruit. In each Line regiment Marmont reduced the number of field battalions to three or two, and, having filled them up to a strength of 700 men each, sent back the cadres and the small remainder of rank and file from the junior battalions to their dépôts. A fortnight after Fuentes there were not more than 28,000 infantry with the eagles in the Army of Portugal, but there was a great mass of convalescents in the base hospitals, and of newly arrived drafts in the governments of Leon and Old Castile, whom Marmont strove, not at first with great success, to draw to himself and embody in their regiments. It

[1] But, for reasons unknown, the 17th Léger, from the original division of Heudelet, changed places with the 26th Line from Loison's old division, and went into the new 6th Division.

was hard to get them forward, when every officer commanding a small post in the rear detained drafts to strengthen his garrison, and when the Governors of Salamanca and Valladolid wanted to keep as many recovered convalescents with them as they could retain, because their governments were under-manned.

The cavalry units were in a far worse state than those of the infantry. Already at Fuentes most of the regiments had shown only two squadrons for want of horses, and had left behind them in their cantonments dismounted men in vast numbers. Marmont, seeing it was impossible to find chargers for them in Spain, was forced to send them all back on foot to Bayonne, to draw horses from the interior of France. In June he could put only 2,500 mounted men in the field. The artillery in a similar fashion was hopelessly short of teams: it could produce only 36 guns (six batteries) properly horsed, though Masséna had started from Santarem in March with more than 100. Marmont says that the army returns showed that Masséna had entered Portugal in 1810 with 4,200 artillery horses—of these only 1,400 survived the retreat, and of them in May only 400 were fit for service[1]. As to the train, it had vanished altogether, so far as horses and waggons went; the Marshal says that precisely four waggons were fully horsed and ready for work when he took over the command. But rest, the return to a land where food was to be got with ease and regularity, and the opening up of the dépôts of Salamanca and Valladolid, where uniforms, boots, and pay had been accumulating, soon did wonders for the army, under the Marshal's careful and judicious supervision. By June he was able to take the field with an army that was restored in morale, and fit for good service.

[1] Marmont to Berthier, May 14, from Salamanca.

SECTION XXVI: CHAPTER V

ALBUERA

SOULT, it will be remembered, had quitted Estremadura, and handed over the charge of the troops left therein to Mortier, on March 14th. He received the news of Beresford's irruption into the province and of the combat of Campo Mayor on March 30th, so that from the beginning of April onward he was aware that it would be incumbent on him to support the 5th Corps and to relieve Badajoz within a few weeks. That he was not forced to march back from Seville to the north at once was due to the breaking of the Jerumenha bridges, which (as we have seen) delayed Beresford's advance and the investment of Badajoz for many days. But by the end of April the danger had grown pressing: Latour-Maubourg had been thrust out of Estremadura, and (deceived by the movements of Colborne) reported that the Allies were about to invade Andalusia also. He had fallen back to Constantina, well within the limits of that kingdom, and not over forty miles from Seville. Nothing definite had been heard of Badajoz and its garrison, since the communications between that fortress and the south had been cut by Beresford's cavalry on April 10th. Though its governor, Phillipon, was known to be a man of resource, and though provisions and military stores (the leavings of Imaz) were abundant, yet the garrison was small for such a large place, and Soult was not aware how far the damaged fortifications had been repaired since his departure. It was clear that he must strike at Beresford without delay, or the news that Badajoz had been attacked and captured might come to hand some black morning.

The Marshal's situation, therefore, on May 1st was not unlike what it had been at the end of the preceding December, when by the Emperor's orders he had been directed to make his first irruption into Estremadura. He must once more collect

from the 70,000 men of the 1st, 4th, and 5th Corps a force sufficient to beat whatever number of troops the Allies had placed in that province. The task would clearly be more difficult than it had been in January, for, instead of 16,000 or 20,000 Spaniards, there were now in Estremadura some 20,000 Anglo-Portuguese, besides the 8,000 men of whom Ballasteros and Castaños could dispose. Moreover, there was Blake to be taken into consideration; but the Marshal—badly informed as to the movements of that general and his corps—thought that he was still so far from the rest of the Allies that he would not be able to join Beresford for battle, if the attack upon the latter was pressed with great swiftness and decision. The only favourable feature in the situation was that Badajoz was now in French hands, and could not be used (as in February) for a general rallying-place for the Allies. Campo Mayor and Olivenza would be of little or no use to Beresford, and, if he made Elvas his *point d'appui*, he must first evacuate all that lay on the south bank of the Guadiana. The only alternative for the British general would be to concentrate and fight at some point where he could cover the siege of Badajoz. This was the probable course for him to adopt, and Soult had to calculate the force that he would require in order to make victory reasonably certain. He fixed it at about 25,000 men—too low an estimate, as it turned out. It is interesting to note that at the very moment when Soult was ordering his concentration at Seville, a dispatch was on the way to him from Napoleon at Paris, dictating the course which he ought to pursue under the exact circumstances which had now arisen. 'Wellington,' wrote the Emperor on March 30th, 'has only 32,000 British troops: he cannot make a detachment of more than 8,000 or 9,000 of them, with 5,000 or 6,000 Portuguese added. It is necessary to keep permanently about Badajoz the value of 15,000 men of all arms, in good state and of the best regiments, so that at the least movement of the English on this side the Duke of Dalmatia, taking with him 8,000 or 10,000 men, should be able to concentrate in Estremadura a total of from 25,000 to 30,000 men. If this exceptional crisis arises, only a corps of observation must be left on the side of Granada, and it must be placed under the orders of the Duke of Belluno (Victor). The Duke of

Dalmatia must keep in correspondence, via Madrid, with the Army of Portugal and the Army of the Centre. The King ought always to keep a division of 6,000 men between the Tagus and Badajoz, ready to unite with the Duke of Dalmatia, if it becomes necessary to resist a movement of the English against Andalusia. But to arrive at this result it is necessary that the country-side should be entirely disgarrisoned, that all hospitals and magazines should be concentrated in Seville, and that Cadiz, Seville, and Badajoz should be the only points to guard, with a corps of observation at Granada. In this case the Duke of Belluno would take command of the troops at Seville and Granada, as well as of the force besieging Cadiz, and the Duke of Dalmatia would only have charge of the army opposed to the English. Counting the division from the Army of the Centre, he can easily unite 30,000 to 35,000 men. . . . In this case he would be able to resist even 30,000 English, if Lord Wellington marched against him with his entire army. But this supposition can never be realized; because, if it happened, the Prince of Essling (Masséna) would be able to march on Lisbon, and the English would find themselves cut off from that place, and between two fires[1].'

From the first part of Napoleon's calculations it is clear that he thought Soult would require about 25,000 men—the 15,000 who were to be left about Badajoz and the 10,000 who were to be brought up from Andalusia: they are increased to 30,000 by erroneous addition only. As a matter of fact Soult, in order to cover Seville and to rescue Victor, had left only 11,000 men in Estremadura on March 14th, and 3,000 of these were now shut up in Badajoz. But on the other hand he collected from Andalusia (including Maransin's column)[2] 16,000 men, so that his fighting force was within a few hundreds of the 25,000 named by the Emperor. The 35,000 spoken of in a later sentence would only be required, so Napoleon thought, if Wellington came down to invade Andalusia with all his British troops. We may point out, by the way, that the Imperial calculations were all wrong in detail, as was bound to be the case when they were made at

[1] Memorandum from Berthier of March 30.

[2] Which belonged to the 5th Corps, and joined it before Soult concentrated at Seville.

Paris on data many weeks old. Wellington, owing to the reinforcements which had landed at Lisbon in the first days of March, had now nearly 40,000 British troops. He had detached 12,000 of them under Beresford[1], and these were accompanied not by 6,000 Portuguese at the most, as the Emperor guessed, but by a full 10,000. There was therefore a serious miscalculation. We may add that if Wellington had taken the unlikely step of concentrating his whole army against Andalusia, he would have had not only 38,000 British troops with him, but nearly 25,000 Portuguese troops of good quality[2]. The united force could have smashed up in one morning's work the 35,000 French under Soult, whom the Emperor thought enough to restrain them. But, as Napoleon truly observed, it was practically impossible for Wellington to make this move, so long as Masséna's force was still opposed to him in the north. It was only when the Army of Portugal moved down to the Guadiana in June that the British general concentrated practically his whole force in one line, behind the Caya, in the southern sphere of operations. And when he had done so the Armies of Portugal and Andalusia united, though about 60,000 strong, did not dare to attack him. But of this more anon.

In early May Soult, under-valuing Beresford's fighting force, thought that 25,000 men would suffice to sweep him behind the Guadiana, even when he had the help of Castaños and Ballasteros. The force was collected in the following fashion: Latour-Maubourg at Constantina had 8,000 men, who had just been rejoined by Maransin's column, thus the 5th Corps was once more concentrated and complete (with the exception of five

[1] Including Alten's brigade, added later.

[2] The force under Beresford comprised (figures of March): British—2nd Division, 5,500; 4th Division, 4,200; Alten's brigade, 1,100; Cavalry, 1,200; Artillery, &c., 500. Total, 12,500. Portuguese—Hamilton's division, 5,000; Harvey's brigade of the 4th Division, 2,900; Collins's brigade (an extemporized unit of which more anon) 1,400; Otway's and Madden's cavalry, 1,000; Artillery, 250. Total, 10,550. The whole, therefore, was about 23,000 instead of the 16,000 on which Napoleon calculated. At Albuera there were absent from the above one British brigade (Kemmis of the 4th Division) and one Portuguese cavalry brigade (Madden), nearly 2,000 men in all. Yet Beresford put 20,000 Anglo Portuguese in line.

battalions in Badajoz, and one or two more which Soult was bringing up from Seville). When all came in, the corps amounted to 10,000 men of all arms. The remaining part of the expedition was made up by requisitioning from Victor's 1st Corps and the lines before Cadiz four battalions and two regiments of cavalry [1], and from Sebastiani's 4th Corps four battalions and three regiments of cavalry [2]. Of the independent division under Godinot, which garrisoned the kingdom of Cordova, Soult took nearly the whole—nine battalions and two regiments of cavalry [3]. The borrowed troops were divided into two large brigades (one might better have been called a small division) under Generals Godinot and Werlé [4], and three provisional brigades of cavalry. They took five batteries (thirty guns) with them, to add to the eighteen guns of Latour-Maubourg, and some companies of sappers and train. The total force available came to just under 25,000 men, unequally divided in numbers between the 5th Corps and the Andalusian reserves. The cavalry was very strong in proportion, about 4,400 sabres [5].

It will be noted that Soult had (as in January) refrained from adopting the general plan which Napoleon favoured, that of abandoning all Andalusia save Seville and the Cadiz Lines, and leaving only a corps of observation at Granada. It is true that the Duke of Dalmatia took very little from Victor, and left the 1st Corps almost intact in the lines, but Sebastiani's 4th Corps was also left only slightly diminished, and was expected to hold down all eastern Andalusia, instead of being

[1] viz. 16th Léger (3 batts.), *grenadiers réunis* (1 batt.), 4th and 14th Dragoons. The 2nd Hussars and 26th Dragoons were already with Latour-Maubourg, never having returned to the 1st Corps since January. The *grenadiers réunis* were formed of the six grenadier companies of the 45th, 63rd, and 95th of the Line.

[2] viz. 58th Ligne (3 batts.), one battalion of *grenadiers réunis* (Poles), 1st Lancers of the Vistula, 20th Dragoons, and 27th *Chasseurs*.

[3] viz. 12th Léger, 51st and 55th Line (3 batts. each), 17th and 27th Dragoons.

[4] Godinot had the 16th Léger and 51st Line, Werlé the 55th, 58th Line, and 12th Léger. The two grenadier battalions made a general reserve of 1,000 men.

[5] N.B.—For further details as to the composition of Soult's army see Appendix XVI.

requisitioned for 10,000 men and reduced to a flying column as the Emperor would have wished. The unit that had been most heavily drawn upon was the garrison of the kingdom of Cordova, and the result of this was that (as in January) very few troops could be detailed for the defence of Seville, since nearly all that had been in its neighbourhood were summoned off to Estremadura. The great city which formed Soult's base was once more left inadequately defended by dépôts and drafts, and *Juramentados* of doubtful fidelity. The Marshal had lately raised some companies of so-called Swiss [1], deserters of all nations, and these were also utilized. But the total left under General Daricau was dangerously small. So keenly was this realized that the governor was directed to retire within the great fortified enclosure of the Carthusian convent (*La Cartuja*) if pressed, and all the military stores had been placed in this immense building, which had been surrounded with a bastioned enceinte, and armed with cannon, so as to form a sort of citadel. The Castle of the Inquisition at Cordova in a similar fashion had been fortified, and converted into a work that could be held against any irregular force, and similar precautions had been taken at Jaen, Andujar, Ronda, Alcala Real, and Niebla, to provide centres of resistance against possible assaults by guerrilleros. Probably, however, Napoleon was right, and if the minor places and eastern Andalusia had been evacuated, Soult might have brought 10,000 more infantry against Beresford, in which case the latter would never have dared to fight him, and must have retired behind the Guadiana. There would have been no battle of Albuera—but on the other hand all the evacuated districts would have flared up into insurrection, and it is difficult to see how Soult could have reconquered them, since he was to be for several months tied up in operations against the British, from which he could not have withdrawn a man.

But having taken another decision, and resolved to surrender nothing, the Marshal had only gathered 12,000 men to reinforce

[1] I cannot find any proper account of these 'compagnies helvétiques' who were not part of the organized Swiss troops in French service. But they are several times mentioned in narratives of 1811. See for example Lapéne, p. 238. Presumably they were in King Joseph's service.

the 5th Corps. They required many days to concentrate, and it was only on May 8th that he reviewed them in their new provisional brigading at Seville, and delivered an allocution in which he announced to them that they were destined to save Badajoz and drive the British from Estremadura, and that the force would march at midnight on the 10th[1]. This threat did not escape the Spanish patriots in the city, who passed the news on so swiftly that Ballasteros was able to forward it to Beresford by the afternoon of the 12th.

Having once started, Soult hoped to surprise his enemy by the swiftness of his movements. The head of the column which marched at 12 p.m. on the night of the 9th–10th was at Santa Ollala, more than thirty miles away, on the 11th. The pace had to slacken in crossing the Sierra Morena, but on the 12th head quarters were at Monasterio (fifteen miles further on) from which Ballasteros's scouts withdrew. Latour-Maubourg and the 5th Corps, far away to the right, had advanced at the same time from Cazalla and Constantina, and driven Castaños's advanced posts from Guadalcanal and then from Llerena. On the 13th the two French forces joined at Fuente Cantos, and their leading cavalry squadrons reached Los Santos, from which the 13th Light Dragoons retired. As Wellington had directed, nearly a month before, in his Elvas memorandum, the Spaniards made no attempt to check the advance: their cavalry withdrew as the French pushed forward; their infantry were prepared to fall back on the rendezvous at Albuera.

From the 13th the British cavalry as well as the Spanish were in touch with Soult; General Long had been lying about Villafranca and Los Santos till that day, with three British and four Portuguese regiments[2]. He retired to Fuente del Maestre, and then to Santa Marta, contenting himself with reporting the successive advances of the French to Beresford,

[1] For details of the allocution to the officers 'rangés en cercle,' see Lapéne, p. 145.

[2] I cannot exactly make out on what day Madden's weak cavalry brigade (4 squadrons 5th and 8th Portuguese) joined Beresford. It was not with him at Campo Mayor on March 25th, but was up by April 10. Probably it joined before April 1st, as it had been at Elvas since the battle of the Gebora.

who was apparently not over well contented with his operations on this and the two following days, and thought that he might have gone back more slowly, and have compelled the leading squadrons of the enemy to deploy and lose time. At Fuente del Maestre the allied cavalry split itself up, Madden with two Portuguese regiments covering the roads to Almendralejo and Solana, while Long and the main body stayed on the high-road to Badajoz via Santa Marta and Albuera [1].

Having such long warning of his adversary's movements, Beresford was able to carry out the concentration of his fighting force at leisure. There was still some uncertainty as to which road the enemy might choose, three [2] being open to him when his advance had reached Los Santos, viz. (1) the obvious central and shortest route by Albuera–Badajoz, (2) the eastern route Solana–Talavera Real–Badajoz, (3) the western route Almendral–Valverde–Badajoz. The former was rather circuitous, its main advantage to the French being that it was all across open flat country, where their superior cavalry would have had excellent ground; but the Albuera route was not perceptibly inferior in this respect, as subsequent operations showed. To take the third or western road, that by Almendral–Valverde (though this is not so long as that by Solana) would have forced Soult to execute a flank march across Beresford's front, and (what probably weighed more with the French Marshal) would have fixed the decisive spot, where the fate of the campaign would be settled, nearer to the point towards which Blake's army was known to be marching: and Soult still hoped to fight his battle in that general's absence.

On the 13th of May Beresford marched out from his lines in front of Badajoz to Valverde, a point convenient for occupying a position across two of the possible roads, and not very remote from the third and least likely one. He took with him the 2nd Division and Hamilton's Portuguese, with three batteries. The rest of the army remained before Badajoz, covering the removal of artillery and stores, but ready to come up at any

[1] For these movements the best authority is Long's journal, on pp. 109–11 of C. B. Long's *Vindication* of his relative.

[2] D'Urban in his narrative points out seven, but four of these were practically impossible.

moment. On the same afternoon he had a conference with General Blake, who rode over from Barcarrota. On the following day Soult's movement seemed to be growing much slower—the heads of his columns only reached Fuente del Maestre and Villafranca. The fact, duly reported to Beresford, that part of the French army had reached the latter place, which is off the main *chaussée* to the right, seemed to make it possible that Soult was, after all, going to move by Talavera Real. Beresford waited for a more precise indication of his adversary's final route, and sent pressing orders to Madden to cover with his scouts all the open country between Talavera Real and Almendralejo. Blake on this day, finding that his cavalry could discover no signs of the French in his front, to the west of the great *chaussée*, drew in from Barcarrota to Almendral, as he promised to do when he met Beresford at Valverde on the 12th.

It being perfectly clear by this time that the French were not about to take the western route, Beresford on the 15th marched the 2nd Division and Hamilton's Portuguese to Albuera, where they were joined by more troops from in front of Badajoz, Alten's German brigade, and a provisional brigade of Portuguese under Colonel Collins [1]. Only the 4th Division and the Spanish brigade belonging to Castaños, lately arrived from Merida, now remained in front of the fortress—all on the south bank save Kemmis's brigade of the first-named unit. The last of the stores were moved on this day from the trenches to Elvas, and the flying bridge opposite the mouth of the Caya was taken up. This last proved a mistake—it was intended that Kemmis should join the army by using a ford below Badajoz, which had been practicable for the last ten days; but on the night of the 15th–16th the water rose, and the brigade was forced to march round by the next passage, that at Jerumenha, which involved a circuit of thirty miles, and made it late for the

[1] This brigade, which appears for the Albuera campaign, was composed of the 5th Line (2 batts.) from the garrison of Elvas, joined by the 5th Caçadores, a detached light battalion which had been serving with the cavalry south of the Tagus since last November (see vol. iii. p. 557). This temporary brigade must not be confused with other units headed by Collins before and after.

battle. Only three companies, which chanced to be on the south bank of the Guadiana when the freshet came down, were able to march off with Cole and the rest of the division, when the order came.

About 15,000 men were already in line at Albuera when Soult's intention at last became perfectly clear: his *chasseurs* and hussars vigorously attacked Long's horsemen at Santa Marta, and began to drive them along the *chaussée*. Long made no stand, though, having three British and two Portuguese regiments (Otway) besides some 600 of Castaños's cavalry, he was in considerable strength. 'He was driven rather faster than one could have wished, and retiring precipitately crossed the Albuera stream, and gave up the whole right bank to the enemy. This haste is a bad thing, because the woods there mask all the enemy's movements,' wrote D'Urban in his diary. Beresford was so vexed with him that he that night assigned to the command of the cavalry of the whole allied army General Lumley, who was Long's senior, leaving the latter in nominal command of the British horse alone. Lumley, though then in charge of an infantry brigade in the 2nd Division, was an old light dragoon, and showed himself next day well able to manage a mass of mounted men [1].

No enemy, save Briche's light cavalry, came up during the 15th—Soult's infantry were far behind, and bivouacked that night at Santa Marta. Beresford was therefore able to complete his concentration at leisure. Blake's army was directed to march up in the afternoon from Almendral, only five miles away; Cole and the Spanish brigade of Carlos de España, Castaños's only infantry force, were directed to break up from the Badajoz lines and march at 2 a.m. to Albuera. The Spaniards, for some unknown reason, were very late; Blake only arrived at 11 p.m., and his troops, encamping in the dark, could not

[1] In a private letter to Sir H. Taylor, D'Urban uses even stronger language: 'Our cavalry instead of retiring leisurely, had fallen back (indeed I may say *fled*) rapidly before the advanced guard of the enemy. The left bank of the Albuera was given up without the slightest attempt at dispute. This error on the part of the officer commanding the cavalry was so completely of a piece with his conduct upon more than one previous occasion, that it became imperatively necessary to relieve him.' (D'Urban MSS.)

take up the position assigned to them till daylight. However, he had arrived, which was the main thing, bringing with him the three infantry divisions of Zayas, Ballasteros, and Lardizabal, and 1,000 horse under Loy, but only one battery. Cole reported that he would be on the ground soon after dawn, but that Kemmis was cut off from him by the rise of the river, so that he could only bring two brigades, instead of three. Orders were also sent to Madden to close up with his Portuguese horse—but he could not be found, having most unaccountably crossed the Guadiana to Montijo with the bulk of his brigade, an eccentric and unjustifiable movement. Two of his squadrons, however, were met, and sent to join Otway that night.

The position of Albuera is not a strong or a well-marked one, yet it is far the best that can be discovered across the Seville *chaussée* for many miles south of Badajoz. It consists of a long rolling line of low hills, extending for several miles along the brook which takes its name from the village. This stream is in spring an insignificant thread of water, fordable anywhere by infantry or cavalry, and allowing even guns and waggons to pass at many points, though there are occasionally long stretches of bank with an almost precipitous drop of ten or twelve feet, which would stop anything on wheels. The ground on the south-east or French bank slopes up in a very gentle rise, and is covered in many places with groves of olives, which make it impossible to take any general view of the country-side, or to get more than vague and partial notions as to any movements of troops that may be going on in it. On the north-west or English bank the rolling heights are completely bare of trees; except at the village of Albuera there is neither house, wall, nor bush upon them—nothing taller than a few withered shrubs three feet high [1].

The so-called heights of Albuera are simply an undulation along the bank of the stream, which rises very slightly above the level of the plateau that stretches from the position to the descent into the valley of the Guadiana, thirteen miles away. This ridge or undulation extends in either direction as far as

[1] This account of the Albuera position was written on the spot, and involved a good deal of walking on a blazing April day. See note at end of the chapter.

the eye can reach, with varying altitude, sometimes only 60 feet, sometimes perhaps 150 feet above the water's edge. There are therefore many 'dips' on the summit of the position. The main battle-spot was on the two slopes of one of these dips, where, between two of the higher knolls of the ridge, there is a depression perhaps a third of a mile in width. The back-descent of the heights, to the north-west, in the direction of Badajoz, is even gentler than that towards the Albuera stream. The 'ravine of the Arroyo river,' marked in Napier's and other maps, is an absurd exaggeration. There is simply a slightly curved 'bottom,' where a lush growth of grass along a certain line may indicate the course of a rivulet in very wet weather. This line has no marked banks, and is as much like a high-road as a ravine: it would not, even after rain, present any obstacle to infantry or cavalry moving in mass[1], and it is a mistake to make it take any prominent part in the history of the battle.

There is no ravine or 'dead ground' of any kind anywhere on either the French or the English side of the Albuera. The slopes are so gentle that any spot can be seen from any other. But the French side is wooded, so that movements of troops are hard to follow, while the other bank is absolutely bare. There is, however, a 'sky-line' on the English heights, between the dip where the main battle took place and Albuera village. An observer standing on the point where Soult formed his front of battle cannot get a view of the English line near the village—to do so he must ride sideways down towards the water, to look along the trough of the depression. Hence Soult during the battle cannot have seen a good deal of what was going on behind the allied front line, but Beresford, on the sky-line above the north-eastern edge of the dip, could make out all Soult's dispositions when the battle smoke did not hinder him.

Albuera is a big well-built village, with a disproportionately high church tower. It stands on a knoll of its own, in front of

[1] Either Napier never saw the ground of Albuera (as Beresford suggests in the *Strictures on Napier's History*, p. 207) or else he had forgotten it. The only good plan available was d'Urban's, and this Napier used (a copy of it is among his portfolio of maps in the Bodleian Library), memory or hypothesis exaggerating into hills and ravines the very gentle ups and downs shown on the map.

the main line of the ridge, to which it serves as an outwork, as Hougoumont did to Wellington's position at Waterloo. It is well away from the river bank, perhaps 150 or 200 yards from it; the bridge which brings the Seville *chaussée* across the stream is not exactly opposite the village, but decidedly to the south-east of it.

The Albuera stream is formed by two minor brooks, the Nogales and the Chicapierna, which meet a little south of the village. Between them is a low wooded hill, which conceals from an observer on the British heights the upper course of the Nogales, and part of the woods beyond, in which the French formed their order of battle. It was behind this long low knoll that Soult hid his main attacking column. But the elevation itself is insignificant, and much less effective than the more distant woods in covering his movement.

Beresford drew up his army on the hypothesis that Soult's aim would be to pierce his centre, by capturing Albuera village, and storming the heights beyond, over which the high-road passes. Years after the battle had become a matter of history he still maintained [1] that this would have been his adversary's best policy, since the place where the road crosses the position is the lowest and weakest part of the heights, and a blow piercing the centre of a hostile army is always more effective than the mere tactical success of turning one of his flanks, which still leaves everything to be decided by hard fighting, if the attacked party throws back his threatened wing, and stands to defend himself in the new position. The ground on the allied right wing he held, on the other hand, to be higher and stronger: and even if the French got upon the crest of the heights, the range gave, by reason of its successive dips, several positions on which a new line could well be formed. I leave these considerations to the critic, and am not fully convinced by them.

Beresford's line was drawn up as follows: on the extreme left, to the north-east of Albuera, were Hamilton's Portuguese division, with Collins's brigade in support, amounting to eleven strong battalions in two lines. Beyond them, to guard the flank, were Otway's weak Portuguese cavalry brigade and the two stray squadrons of Madden's. The whole made only 800 sabres.

[1] *Strictures on Napier's History*, vol. iii. pp. 233–4.

The centre was formed of William Stewart's English division, the 2nd, comprising the three brigades of Colborne, Hoghton, and Abercrombie [1], ten battalions. In front of them Alten's two German battalions occupied Albuera village. The 2nd Division was drawn up across the high-road, on the reverse slope of the heights; Beresford had learned from Wellington to hide his men till the actual moment of conflict, and, as he says with some pride, not a man of Stewart's or Hamilton's divisions was visible, and the only troops under the enemy's eye were Otway's cavalry and the two German battalions in Albuera.

In the rear of Stewart, as general reserve, was Cole's division from the siege of Badajoz, which had marched at 2 o'clock a.m. according to orders and reached the field at 6.30 in the morning. There was some error in 'logistics' here, for Cole ought to have been earlier on the field. He had fifteen miles to cover, and should have been started sooner, for preference on the preceding evening, so as to allow his men time to rest and cook on reaching the position. Having marched till dawn they then had to lie down in formation, and eat as best they might, for the French were on the move not very long after they came up. The division, as already mentioned, consisted only of Myers's fusilier brigade (1 and 2/7th Royal Fusiliers and 1/23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers) and Harvey's Portuguese brigade (11th, 23rd, and 1st battalion Lusitanian Legion). Kemmis with the other British brigade, save three companies which had followed Myers, was making a fruitless march against time, round by Jerumenha. With Cole there had also come up Castaños's sole contribution of infantry—the weak brigade of Carlos de España, three battalions with 1,700 bayonets [2].

The right wing of Beresford's position, the part of it which he thought least likely to be attacked, was held by Blake's 12,000 men. Having encamped anyhow on the hillside, when they arrived at midnight, they had to be collected and rearranged

[1] Who took over Lumley's brigade when the latter was promoted to command the cavalry that morning.

[2] The remainder of Murillo's division of 3,000 men, which formed the infantry of the 5th Army, was at Merida, save one battalion in garrison at Olivenza.

with much loss of time after morning broke. Indeed, they had formed their line only about an hour before the battle began. The three infantry divisions of Lardizabal, Ballasteros, and Zayas were arranged in succession from left to right, each with one brigade in first and one in second line. The 1,100 horse of Loy were out on the extreme right, corresponding to Otway's Portuguese on the extreme left. Of the rest of the allied cavalry, De Grey's 700 heavy dragoons and 600 horse of Castaños's Estremaduran force, under Penne Villemur, were in reserve near Cole's 4th Division. The 13th Light Dragoons, separated from the other two British regiments, were watching the course of the Albuera from the bridge upwards, in front of Blake's line.

Soult had come prepared to fight on the morrow, as soon as his infantry should arrive on the field. At nightfall only one brigade of them was up. The main body had bivouacked at Santa Marta, from whence they broke up before dawn and marched eleven miles to the battlefield. Werlé's reserve, forming the tail of the column, was not closed up till seven or eight o'clock in the morning. The Marshal was still under the impression that Blake had not yet arrived, and that Beresford could not have more than 20,000 men in line opposite him [1]. It is one of the ironies of history to read in his dispatch that his great flank attack, which so much surprised Beresford, and caused so much confusion in the allied army at the commencement of the action, was made with the intention of cutting in between Beresford and Blake, whom he believed to be still on the march from the direction of Almendral, some miles to the south. The Spanish army, having arrived after dark, had never been seen; and at Beresford's request Blake had ranged it behind the sky-line on the crest, so that nothing was visible save Loy's horse far on the right. Soult thought these were Penne Villemur's squadrons,

[1] In his dispatch to Berthier, written before leaving Seville, he spoke confidently of cutting in ahead of Blake, and surmised that the latter would find himself in a very compromising position, when he arrived in southern Estremadura, on learning that Beresford had already been driven across the Guadiana. On the 15th spies brought him the statement that Blake was timed to join Beresford only on the 17th. His battle-dispatch distinctly says that his first news of the junction having already taken place was got from prisoners during the course of the action.

belonging to Castaños, which had been accompanying the British cavalry for some days.

The Marshal could make out very little of his enemy's force or position. All that could be guessed was that Otway's and Loy's cavalry, both well visible, covered the two ends of the line. Soult's scheme of attack was ingenious, though founded on an utterly wrong hypothesis. He resolved to demonstrate with one infantry and one cavalry brigade against the village of Albuera, so as to attract his enemy's attention to his centre, while carrying the rest of his army far to the left, under cover of the woods and the low hill between the Nogales and Chicapierna brooks, to a point from which they could turn Beresford's right, by crossing the two streams and ascending the plateau somewhere beyond the point where Loy's cavalry were visible.

The details of the execution of this plan were very well worked out. Godinot's brigade (the 3,500 muskets of the 12th Léger and 51st Ligne) marched upon Albuera, flanked by Briche's light cavalry, and supported by the fire of two batteries. They became at once hotly engaged with Alten's German battalions, and with two battalions of Spaniards whom Blake sent down to give the village flank support. A Portuguese battery above the village swept the approaches to the bridge very effectively [1]. Meanwhile, on Godinot's left, Soult showed two brigades of dragoons and Werlé's strong brigade of 6,000 men drawn up on the edge of the wood, and apparently about to attack Blake's line in front. But deep in the olives to the left the two divisions of the 5th Corps, Girard and Gazan, were executing a circular sweep, with a cavalry brigade in front of them, quite out of sight. They were covered not only by the trees but by the height between the Nogales and Chicapierna brooks.

Beresford and Blake prepared to resist an attack on their centre and right, and felt reasonably confident of giving a good account of themselves. But the frontal attack seemed somehow to hang fire, and suddenly a new development came: four regiments of French cavalry, far to the right, galloped out of the woods, across the two brooks, and up the slopes far beyond Beresford's right. Loy's Spanish cavalry, who lay in that direction, naturally gave way before them. Immediately afterwards the

[1] The battery was that of Captain Arriaga.

head of a long infantry column came marching up from the same point, making for the heights at a place some way beyond Blake's extreme right. It is curious to note that they did not aim at attacking Blake's actual flank, but rather at getting on top of the heights beyond him, so as to be able to move against him on the level of the plateau, without having to climb the hill in face of opposition.

Beresford rode hastily along the line to meet Blake, and requested him to deal with this unexpected flank attack by drawing off one of his two lines, and placing it at right angles to the original position, across the summit of the heights. He himself would take care of the frontal attack. Blake promised to do this, but sent only one brigade of Zayas's division, four battalions, and his only battery, to execute the required movement. He was still not convinced that the front attack might not be the main one. Beresford meanwhile went back to his own troops, to direct Stewart's division to prepare to support the Spaniards when necessary, and Lumley's cavalry to move off to join Loy on the extreme right.

The next half-hour served to develop the whole face of the battle in its second aspect. The French cavalry at the head of the turning column spread themselves out on the rolling plateau to the west of the heights so as to flank their infantry. The 5th Corps formed itself in a column of extraordinary depth on the undulating summit of the ridge, and began to move on toward Blake's flank. The responsibility for the order of battle adopted must apparently be laid on the shoulders of Girard, the senior division-commander, who was placed that day at the head of the whole corps; Latour-Maubourg, who had led it during the last two months, had been taken away to assume general charge of the cavalry. Girard, as it seems, intended to beat down the hastily formed line of defence, which the Spaniards were opposing to him, by the impetus of an immensely heavy column. His force consisted of two divisions, each of two brigades, and each brigade composed of from four to six battalions [1]. I had long sought for an exact description of his array, of which

[1] The difference in strength was caused by the fact that two brigades had contributed two, and one other brigade one, battalion each to the garrison of Badajoz.

the French historians and Soult's dispatch only say that it was a *colonne serrée de bataillons.* At last I found the required information in the Paris archives[1], in the shape of an anonymous criticism on Soult's operations, drawn up (apparently for Napoleon's eye) by some officer who had been set to write a report on the causes of the loss of the battle.

This document says that 'the line of attack was formed by a brigade in column of attack [i. e. a column formed of four battalions in column of double companies, one battalion behind the other]. To the right and left the front line was in a mixed formation, that is to say, on each side of the central column was a battalion deployed in line, and on each of the two outer sides of the deployed battalions was a battalion or a regiment in column, so that at each end the line was composed of a column ready to form square, in case the hostile cavalry should try to fall upon one of our flanks—which was hardly likely, since our own cavalry was immensely superior to it in number.'

This formation disposed of the nine battalions of Girard's division, which, as we see, advanced with a front consisting of three battalions in column and two in line. Gazan's, the 2nd Division of the corps, followed very close behind Girard, the four regiments each in column with their two (or three) battalions one behind the other. The 2nd Division had been intended to attack as an independent supporting line, but ultimately worked up so close to the 1st Division that it could not easily be drawn off or disentangled, and to the Allies the whole 8,400 men looked like one vast column, with a front of about 500 men only, which, allowing for battalion intervals, just stretched across the top level of the heights, which is here about 700 yards broad.

Three batteries of field artillery belonging to the 5th Corps accompanied the 1st Division; a fourth, of horse artillery, was with the cavalry which covered the left flank of the column. Two more were in company with Werlé's brigade. The remaining two stopped with Godinot opposite Albuera.

When Blake realized the strength of the turning force, he began to detach more troops from his front line to strengthen Zayas, whose four battalions would obviously be no more than

[1] Those at the War Ministry, not the *Archives Nationales.*

a mouthful for the 5th Corps. They went in haste, four battalions from Ballasteros, two from Lardizabal, but failed to reach Zayas before the fighting began. Meanwhile a majestic movement changed the whole aspect of the French front. The two brigades of dragoons which had hitherto formed the French right-centre wheeled into column of squadrons, and galloped off in beautiful order along the side of the Albuera brook till they reached the 5th Corps; passing behind it they joined the cavalry on its left, which now became 3,500 strong. Latour-Maubourg was with them in person. At the same moment Werlé's 6,000 infantry performed a slower and shorter circular march and joined the rear of the 5th Corps, to which they now acted as a reserve. Thus Soult had all his infantry save Godinot's brigade of 3,500 men, and all his cavalry save Briche's two regiment of light horse, 550 sabres, massed opposite Blake's new 'refused' right flank.

The sight of this sweep to the south on the part of the French caused Beresford to make a complete change in his disposition. The whole 2nd Division, one brigade following the other, in the order Colborne–Hoghton–Abercrombie, marched along the top of the heights to reinforce Zayas. Hamilton's Portuguese were to move in, to take up the ground evacuated by the 2nd Division. Lastly, Cole's 4th Division, Myers's British and Harvey's Portuguese brigades, forming the reserve, were moved a full mile to the right, and placed behind the English and Spanish cavalry, facing Latour-Maubourg's great mass of horse. It was the sight of these eight solid battalions in column, ready to form square, which alone prevented the French cavalry general from ordering a general charge upon the 2,300 allied horse in his front, whom he outnumbered in the proportion of three to two, and of whom only De Grey's 700 sabres were British. For the 13th Light Dragoons, the third regiment in the field, was covering the other wing of the new front, down by the Albuera stream.

Zayas's Spaniards, having a much shorter way to move than the French turning column, were in line of battle long before the 5th Corps came up against them. But the reinforcements tardily sent by Blake were still coming up, and forming on Zayas's flanks in much confusion, when the fighting began. Most of them prolonged the line down the slope of the heights

above the Chicapierna brook. Beresford was personally occupied in posting and aligning them at the moment of the first clash.

Zayas, whose behaviour all through the day was most creditable, had found a very good point at which to draw up his brigade and battery. The summit of the heights is not level, but undulating; he had chosen the deepest dip in their summit, about a mile to the south of Albuera village, and drew up his small force in line on the hither side of it, so that the enemy had to attack him slightly uphill. His four battalions exactly occupied the top of the plateau; the troops under Ballasteros, which were now coming up, were not on the top, but on the descending slope towards the stream.

Girard's two divisions advancing along the summit had a front about equal to that of Zayas, but four times as deep. Opposite the rest of the Spanish line, Ballasteros's battalions, they sent out nothing but skirmishers. But Girard's division, with a line of *tirailleurs* in front, descended their own side of the dip, and then began to ascend that occupied by the Spaniards. When they had reached a point on the gentle up-slope about sixty yards from the Spaniards, the French *tirailleurs* cleared off to right and left, and the battalions behind them began to open up their fire, slowly advancing between each volley. The musketry was hot, and both sides were falling freely, when the first British troops arrived on the battle-spot. These were the four battalions of Colborne's brigade, at the head of the 2nd Division: the 1/3rd, 2/48th, 2/66th, and 2/31st, counting in that order from right to left. With them was the divisional commander, William Stewart.

Beresford, in his account of the battle, says that he had intended to draw up the whole 2nd Division in a single line in support of Zayas, and to advance with it against the French when all was in order. But William Stewart, though he had received no order to attack, and had been only directed to support the Spaniards, took upon himself to assume the offensive. The position indeed was rather a tempting one: the enemy was engaged with Zayas on an equal front, and had no flank guard of any kind within a quarter of a mile. He could obviously be assailed at great advantage by a force which should pass round and through Zayas's right, and place itself perpendicular to Girard's long unprotected

flank. This movement Stewart took upon himself to execute; as each of the battalions of the 1st Brigade came up, it was extended and sent forward, apparently in a sort of échelon, the Buffs leading, far to the flank, and the 48th and 66th passing actually through Zayas's right battalions. But the 31st, the left regiment, had not come up or deployed when the other three went forward into action [1]. Along with Colborne there was coming up Cleeves's battery of the King's German Legion. The leading four guns got into action, just to Zayas's front, at the same moment that the British infantry went forward.

The French column, thus unexpectedly attacked in flank both by artillery and infantry fire, was naturally thrown into dreadful confusion. The two battalions in column which formed its left section faced outwards, and opened a rolling fire three deep, the front rank kneeling. But they could not stand the volleys poured into them from a distance of sixty paces, and soon began to break—the men were seen trying to go to the rear, and the officers beating them back with their swords. Colborne's line cheered, and went forward to complete its victory with the bayonet.

At this moment a dreadful catastrophe occurred: Latour-Maubourg had been watching the struggle on the hillside before him, and, when he saw it going badly for his friends, directed his nearest cavalry regiments, which chanced to be the 1st Lancers of the Vistula and the 2nd Hussars, to charge along the slopes against the exposed outer flank of Colborne's brigade. At this moment the morning, which had been fair at first but had been growing darker every hour, was disturbed by a blinding shower of rain and hail coming from the north. It is said to have been largely in consequence of this accident that the approach of the 800 horsemen was unnoticed by any of the British infantry—but Colborne's men were also smothered in their own smoke, and

[1] Beresford suggests that Colborne asked Stewart to allow him to put the right wing of the Buffs into square or column, so as to protect the flank of the brigade, but that Stewart refused. Colborne's short letter on the battle does not say so; but as he was on very friendly terms with Stewart, he may have refrained from writing the fact. He only says that the order of attack adopted was not his, and that he had no responsibility for it. See Beresford's *Further Strictures on Napier*, vol. iii. p. 159.

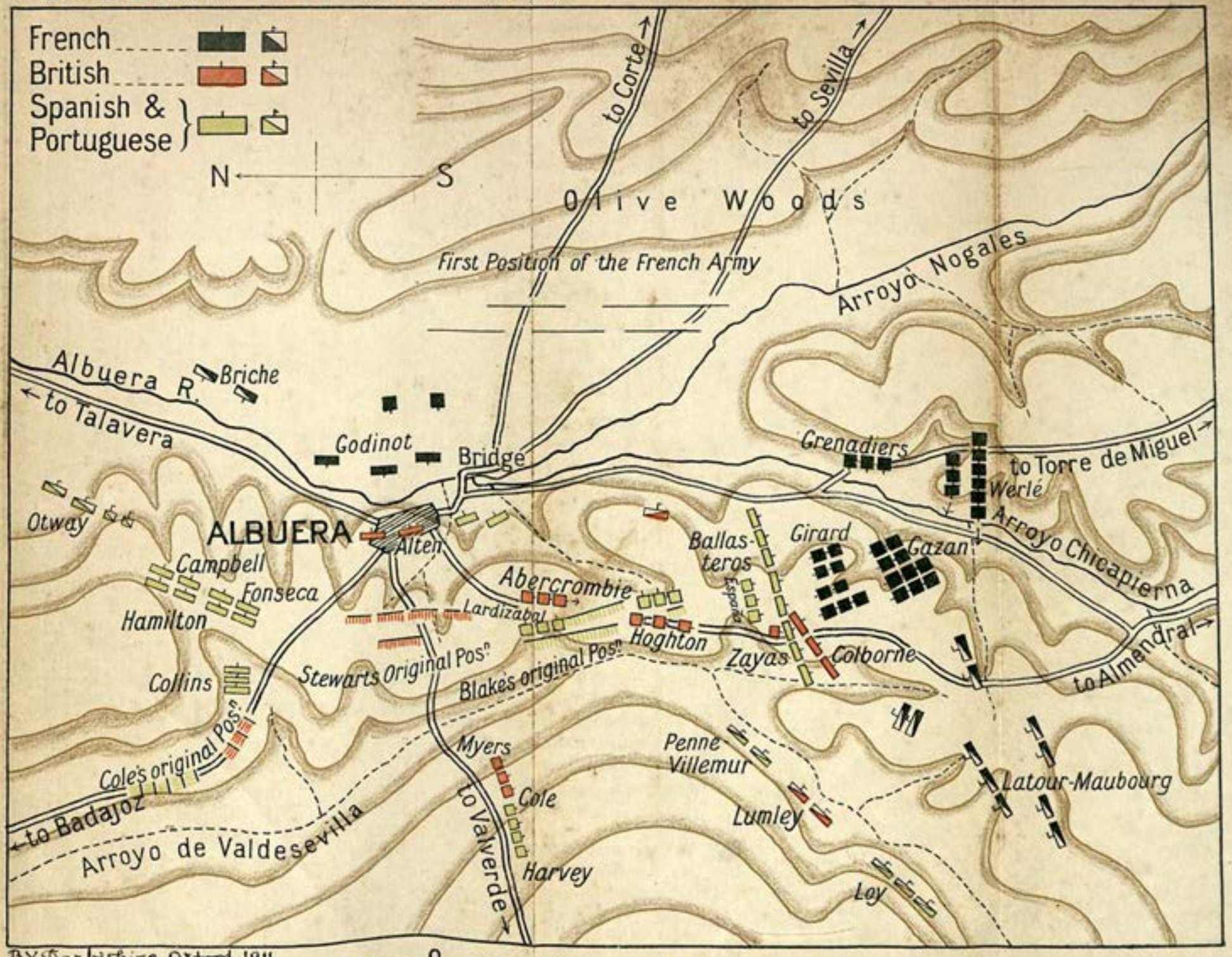
entirely concentrated on the work before them. At any rate the charge took the Buffs in flank, rolled them up, and then swept down the back of the other two battalions, and on to Cleeves's battery. It is hardly exaggeration to say that Colborne's three leading battalions were annihilated in five minutes. Fifty-eight officers out of 80, 1,190 men out of 1,568 were slain, wounded, or captured. The number of killed was out of all proportion to the wounded: in the Buffs there were 212 dead to 234 hurt. This ghastly slaughter is said to have been due to the fact that the savage Polish lancers not only refused to accept surrender from the unhappy infantry, but deliberately speared the wounded as they lay. Nor can I refuse credit to the general statement of contemporary British authorities after reading the journal of Major Brooke, commanding the 2/48th, who relates how, after he had surrendered and was being taken to the rear by two French infantry soldiers, a Pole rode up to him and deliberately cut him down, after which the ruffian made his horse trample over him and left him for dead[1]. In the regimental annals of the 66th two officers are named as having been wounded by the lance, while already disabled and lying on the ground[2]. Peninsular tradition tells that the 2nd Division after Albuera swore to give no quarter to Poles.

But not all the victorious horsemen were so inhumane; 479 prisoners, many wounded, were driven off to the French lines. The brigade lost five of its six colours; and the four guns of Cleeves's battery, which had accompanied it, were captured. Only one howitzer, however, was dragged off by the victors—the other three were left behind for want of horses. The 2/31st, somewhat to the left rear of its comrades, had time to form square, and beat off without difficulty the rush of the remnant of the lancers who got so far as its position. Marking too late the awful catastrophe on his left, General Lumley sent two squadrons of the 4th Dragoons to fall upon the flank and rear of the Poles—but they were intercepted by a French hussar regiment which Latour-Maubourg sent out to cover the retreat of the lancers,

[1] I published Major Brooke's diary in *Blackwood* for 1908, with an account of his almost miraculous subsequent escape from Seville, under the title of 'A Prisoner of Albuera.'

[2] See *History of the 66th Regiment* in Cannon's Series.

ALBUERA. Nº I (About 10 a.m.)



Note.—The front line of the French attacking force is not correctly represented. It consisted of a column of four battalions in the centre, flanked by two deployed battalions, and with battalions in column placed outside the two deployed battalions on either side (see p. 380). In the French reserve there should be only two, not three, battalions of Grenadiers. The right flank of Zayas's line is two battalions too long.

and were beaten back with the loss of both their squadron leaders wounded and taken prisoners[1].

It may be remarked that the loss of the victorious cavalry was very heavy, though not out of proportion to their success. The lancers lost 130 men out of 580—the hussars who charged in support of them 70 out of 300. It was a curious evidence of the headlong nature of their charge that some scores of the Poles, after passing by and failing to break the square of the 2/31st, actually rode down the rear of Zayas's Spanish line, sweeping aside that general and his staff, and coming into collision soon after with Beresford and his—the Marshal actually parried a lance-thrust, and cast the man who dealt it from his saddle, and his aides-de-camp had to fight for their lives.

At this moment the head of Hoghton's brigade was just coming up from the rear—and its leading regiment opening fire on the scattered lancers shot a great many men of the rear rank of Zayas's Spaniards in the back. Notwithstanding this, and to their eternal credit, the Spaniards did not break, and continued their frontal contest with Girard's division, which had not slackened for a moment during Colborne's disastrous fight[2].

There was a distinct pause, however, in the battle after this bloody episode. The leading division of French infantry had been so much shaken and driven into disorder, by Colborne's momentary pressure on their flank, that the whole column had lost its impetus, and stood wavering below the Spanish line. Girard, regarding his own division as practically a spent force, ordered up Gazan's two brigades to relieve it. There was fearful confusion while the new columns were thrusting their way to the front, and they were never properly formed. For the rest of the

[1] Napier is quite wrong in saying that this small diversion was successful, iii. 167. The prisoners were Captains Phillips and Spedding.

[2] The writer of the *Strictures on Napier's History*, vol. iii, gives as an eye-witness the following anecdote: 'As a Spanish soldier in the ranks close to the Marshal was looking to the rear, a Spanish-Irish officer in that service cried to him, "To-day is not the day to fly, when you are fighting as the comrades of the British." The poor fellow replied, "No, señor, mas los Ingleses nos tiraron por atrás."' The Spanish never at any moment fired into the British, as Napier asserts. The mistake was remedied by Beresford's aide-de-camp Arbuthnot, who rode, at great risk, along the front of the 29th, and stopped their fire.

battle the two divisions formed a dense mass of 8,000 men, which looked like one solid clump, without much vestige of regular formation.

While this confused change of front-line was being carried out by the French, Beresford had leisure to deploy Hoghton's brigade in the rear of Zayas, and Abercrombie's in rear of Ballasteros, lower down the slope. He then proceeded to bring them forward to relieve the Spaniards. The latter, it is due to them to explain, had behaved extremely well. Beresford bears witness that Zayas's four battalions, on the edge of the undulation which marked the front of battle 'did not even to the end break their line or quit the field, as Napier alleges. After having suffered very considerable loss they began to crowd together in groups, and it was then that the second line (Hoghton and Abercrombie) was ordered up.' The losses of the two battalions of Irlanda, and the 2nd and 4th Spanish Guards, were indeed the best testimonial to their good service. They had 615 officers and men killed and wounded out of 2,026 present, over 30 per cent. —all lost by musketry or artillery fire without a foot of ground having been yielded, in a close struggle that had lasted over an hour.

With the coming up of Gazan's division on one side, and of Hoghton's and Abercrombie's brigades on the other, the second stage of the battle was reached. The clash was confined to the top of the plateau, the French having only a skirmishing line opposite Abercrombie on the slope, though the central backbone of the ridge was crowded with their dense columns. Hence it may be said that for the next half-hour Hoghton's men, assisted by the 2/31st, the sole survivors of Colborne's brigade alone, were fighting the entire 5th Corps—a line of 1,900 men two deep opposed to a mass of 8,000 twelve deep, on an equal front. This was the hardest and most splendid fighting done that day, not even excepting the glorious advance of the Fusiliers half an hour later. The three battalions, 29th, 1/48th, and 1/57th, absolutely died in line[1], without yielding an inch. Their losses speak for themselves—56 officers and 971 men killed and

[1] It was here that the 57th earned the well-known nickname of the Die-hards, from their splendid answer to Colonel Inglis's adjuration.

wounded out of 95 officers and 1,556 men present. The best account of this part of the action that I know is in the reminiscences of Moyle Sherer of the 1/48th:—

'When we arrived near the retiring Spaniards, and formed our line to advance through them towards the enemy, a very noble-looking young Spanish officer rode up to me, and begged me, with a sort of proud anxiety, to take notice that his countrymen were ordered to retire, not flying. Just as our line had entirely cleared the Spaniards, the smoke of battle was for one moment blown aside, by the slackening of the fire, and gave to our view the French grenadier caps, their arms, and the whole aspect of their frowning masses. It was a grand, but a momentary sight; a heavy atmosphere of smoke enveloped us, and few objects could be discerned at all—none distinctly. The best soldier can make no calculation of time, if he be in the heat of an engagement; but this murderous contest of musketry lasted long. At intervals a shriek or a groan told that men were falling around me; but it was not always that the tumult of the contest suffered me to catch individual sounds. The constant "feeling to the centre" and the gradual diminution of our front more truly bespoke the havock of death. We were the whole time progressively advancing upon and shaking the enemy. As we moved slowly, but ever a little in advance, our own killed and wounded lay behind us; we arrived among those of the Spaniards who had fallen in the first onset, then among those of the enemy. At last we were only twenty yards from their front.' The brigade had lost nearly two-thirds of its numbers, the brigadier had been killed; of the three battalion commanders one was killed and two wounded. The front of the shrinking line no longer covered that of the French mass before it. But the enemy was in no condition to profit by the exhaustion of the British. The fire of the line had, as always, been more effective than that of the column. The front of the enemy was one deep bank of dead and wounded; the 5th Corps lost 3,000 men that day, and there can be no doubt that 2,000 of them fell during this murderous exchange of musketry.

Meanwhile it is strange to find that both commanders allowed this duel of the many against the few, on the plateau, to go on undisturbed. Soult had still eleven battalions intact in reserve

—Werlé's brigade and two battalions of *grenadiers réunis*: his cavalry was also doing nothing, save observe Lumley's much inferior force. Beresford had still of intact troops the 4th Division, the three brigades of Hamilton's and Collins's Portuguese, and the 4,000 Spaniards who had remained on their original position. None of those forces on either side were being utilized during the crisis of the battle.

The explanation is to be found in the narratives of the two hostile generals. Soult says in his dispatch to the Emperor, 'When I ascended the heights, at the moment that the enemy's second line advanced and began to press in our front, I was surprised to notice their great numbers. Immediately afterwards I learned from a Spanish prisoner that Blake had already joined Beresford, so that I had 30,000 men to deal with. The odds were not fair, and I resolved at once to give up my original project, and to aim at nothing more than retaining the ground already won.' The Marshal therefore changed his plan from an offensive to a defensive battle, and refused to engage his reserves, or to bid his cavalry charge—a most half-hearted resolve.

As to Beresford, he was anxious to succour Hoghton, but he did not wish to move the 4th Division, which (he thought) was playing its part in 'containing' Latour-Maubourg's enormous mass of cavalry, and covering the Valverde and Badajoz road—the line of communication of the allied army. He sent back instead to order up Hamilton's Portuguese to the hilltop—4,800 fresh infantry. But it took a much greater time to bring them up than Beresford had expected. Some of the aides-de-camp sent to summon them were wounded on the way; but the main delay was caused by the fact that Hamilton, instead of taking up Stewart's original position, had gone down closer to Albuera, to support Alten's brigade at the village against Godinot's attack, which had become a very fierce one. It was only after many precious minutes had been wasted that he was found, and Fonseca's and Collins's brigades did not start for half an hour after the order had been sent to them. Campbell's brigade remained to give Alten help, if he should need it.

Meanwhile Beresford was trying to utilize the troops already at hand: Abercrombie's brigade was told to wheel inward and attack the right flank of the 5th Corps, while the Marshal him-

self tried to move up Carlos de España's Spanish brigade to the place where Colborne had fought so unsuccessfully a little earlier, on the left flank of the French mass. But this brigade, demoralized relics of the lost army of the Gebora, refused to face the fire, though the Marshal went to lead it on in person, seized one colonel by the epaulettes, and tried to drag him to the front of his battalion. As this brigade only lost 33 men out of 1,700 present, it is clear that it misbehaved.

At last Beresford grew so anxious at the sight of Hoghton's gallant brigade shrinking away to nothing, while no succour appeared from the rear, that he actually sent orders to Alten's Germans to evacuate Albuera village, and to come in haste to strengthen the centre. They were to be relieved by a brigade of the Spaniards who still held the old position above the village. The legionaries were disentangled from the village with some difficulty, and the French 16th Léger got into it before the Spaniards had taken Alten's place. If Godinot had been in force, the position here would have been very dangerous; but he had only six battalions, 3,500 men in all, and was hopelessly outnumbered, for Hamilton had left Campbell's Portuguese brigade opposite him, and 3,000 Spaniards came down from the heights. As a matter of fact Alten never had to go to the front; the crisis on the heights was over before he got far from the village, and he was sent back to retake it half an hour after he had given it up. This he accomplished with a loss of 100 men, long after the more important business on the heights was over.

The stroke which ended the battle came from a direction where Beresford had intended to keep to the defensive, and was delivered by the one part of his army which he had refused to utilize—the 4th Division. Cole and his eight battalions had been standing for an hour and a half supporting the allied cavalry, opposite Maubourg's threatening squadrons. He was himself doubting whether he ought not to take a more active part, and sent an aide-de-camp to Beresford to ask for further orders [1]; but this officer was badly wounded on the way, and the

[1] This was an Anglo-Swiss officer, Major Roverea, whose memoirs have lately been published.

message was never delivered. If it had been, the answer would undoubtedly have been in the negative.

But at this moment there rode up to the 4th Division Henry Hardinge, then a young Portuguese colonel, and Deputy Quartermaster-general of the Portuguese army. He had no orders from Beresford, but he took upon himself to urge Cole to assume the responsibility of advancing, saying (what was true enough) that Hoghton's brigade on the heights above could not hold out much longer, and that there were no British reserves behind the centre. Cole hesitated for a moment—the proposal that he should advance across open ground in face of 3,500 French cavalry, without any adequate support of that arm on his own side, was enough to make any man think twice. But he had already been pondering over the move himself, and after a short conference with Lumley, his colleague in command of the cavalry, determined to risk all.

The 4th Division was ordered to deploy from columns into line, and to strike obliquely at the French flank. Entirely conscious of the danger from the twenty-six squadrons of French horse before him, Cole flanked his deployed battalions with a unit in column at either end: at the right flank, where Harvey's Portuguese brigade was drawn out, he placed a provisional battalion made up of the nine light companies of all his regiments, British and Portuguese; at the left extremity, on the flank of his British Fusilier brigade—the two battalions of the 7th, and the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers—was a good Portuguese unit—Hawkshaw's battalion of the Loyal Lusitanian Legion [1]. The line made up 5,000 bayonets—2,000 British, 3,000 Portuguese. The whole of the English and Spanish cavalry advanced on his flank and rear, Lefebure's horse-artillery battery accompanying the extreme right [2].

The sight of this mile of bayonets moving forward showed Soult that he must fight for his life—there was no drawn battle

[1] It appears that the three stray companies from Kemmis's absent brigade which had reached the field, were put into the square at the right flank also.

[2] What exactly passed between Cole and Hardinge is thoroughly worked out by the correspondence between them printed in the *United Service Journal* for 1841.

possible, but only dire disaster, unless Cole were stopped. Accordingly he told Latour-Maubourg to charge the Portuguese brigade, while the whole nine battalions of Werlé's reserve were sent forward diagonally to protect the flank of the 5th Corps, moving along the upper slope of the heights so as to thrust themselves between the Fusilier brigade and the flank of Girard and Gazan. Soult had now no reserve left except the two battalions of *grenadiers réunis*, which he held back for the last chance, on his right rear, keeping up the connexion with Godinot.

The story of what happened at the right end of Cole's line is simple: Latour-Maubourg sent four regiments of dragoons at the middle of the Portuguese brigade, thinking to break it down, as he had done often before with deployed infantry in Spanish battles. But Harvey's four battalions, keeping absolutely steady, delivered a series of volleys which completely shattered the advance of the charging squadrons. It was a fine achievement for troops which had never before taken part in the thick of a battle—for the 11th and 23rd Portuguese Line had not been engaged at Bussaco or any previous action of importance. Owing to their excellent behaviour the flank of the British brigade was kept perfectly safe from cavalry assaults during the next half-hour.

Myers's three Fusilier battalions, therefore, with the Lusitanian Legion battalion that guarded their left rear, came into collision with Werlé's three regiments without any interference from without. They were outnumbered by over two to one—2,000 British and 600 Portuguese against 5,600 French. But Werlé had adopted the same vicious formation which had already hampered the 5th Corps—his nine battalions were in three columns of regiments, each with a front of only two companies and a depth of nine, i. e. he was opposing in each case a front of about 120 men in the first two ranks, capable of using their muskets, to a front of about 500—the fact that there were 16 men in depth, behind the 120 who could fire, was of no profit to him. Three separate regimental duels followed—the 23rd and the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 7th Fusiliers each tackled a column, as Blakeney, the colonel of the last-named unit, tells in his letter[1]. In each case the stress for the moment

[1] Quoted in the Cole-Hardinge correspondence in the *United Service Journal* for 1841.

was tremendous. Blakeney may be quoted for its general character:—

'From the quantity of smoke,' he writes, 'I could perceive very little but what went on in my own front. The 1st battalion of the 7th closed with the right column of the French: I moved on and closed with the second; the 23rd took the third. The men behaved most gloriously, never losing their rank, and closing to the centre as casualties occurred. The French faced us at a distance of about thirty or forty paces. During the closest part of the action I saw their officers endeavouring to deploy their columns, but all to no purpose. For as soon as the third of a company got out, they would immediately run back, to be covered by the front of their column.' This lasted for some minutes—possibly twenty—when suddenly the enemy broke, and went up the hillside in three disorderly clumps, which presently splayed out into a mass of running men. The Fusiliers followed, still firing, until they crowned the ridge: the end of their movement was under a terrible artillery fire from Soult's reserve batteries, which were used till the last possible moment to cover the flying infantry. The fusiliers lost more than half their numbers—1,045 out of 2,015 officers and men. Their gallant brigadier, Myers, was among the slain. Werlé's three regiments had casualties of well over 1,800 out of 5,600 present—a bigger total but a much smaller percentage—one in three instead of the victors' one in two.

The rout of the French reserves would have settled the fate of the battle in any case; but already it was won on the summit of the plateau also. For at the same moment when the Fusiliers closed, Abercrombie's brigade had wheeled in upon the right of the much-disordered mass that represented the 5th Corps, and, when they followed up their volleys with a charge, Girard's and Gazan's men ran to the rear along the heights, leaving Hoghton's exhausted brigade lying dead in line in front of them. The fugitives of the 5th Corps mingled with those from Werlé's brigade, and all passed the Chicapierna brook in one vaste horde.

There was practically no pursuit: Latour-Maubourg threw his squadrons between the flying mass and the victorious Allies and the British and Portuguese halted on the heights that they

had won. Soult's last infantry reserve, the two grenadier battalions, were also drawn out on the nearer side of the Chicapierna, and suffered severely from the artillery fire of the Allies, losing 370 men out of 1,000 in twenty minutes. But Lumley's cavalry could not meddle with Latour-Maubourg's double strength, and it was not till some time had passed that Beresford brought up three Portuguese brigades in line—Collins, Fonseca, and Harvey—and finally pushed the enemy over the brook. By this moment Soult had got nearly all his artillery—forty guns—in line on the height between the two brooks, and their fire forbade further progress, unless Beresford were prepared to storm that position with the Portuguese. He refused to try it, and wisely; for though the enemy's infantry were completely out of action, it is a formidable thing to deliver a frontal attack on six batteries flanked by 3,500 horse.

So finished the fight of Albuera; a drenching rain, similar to that which had been so deadly to Colborne's brigade, ended the day, and made more miserable the lot of the 10,000 wounded who lay scattered over the hillsides. The British had hardly enough sound men left in half the battalions to pick up their own bleeding comrades, much less to bear off the mounds of French wounded, who lay along the slopes of the gentle dip where the battle had raged hardest. It was two days before the last of these were gathered in.

That Albuera was the most bloody of all the fights of the Peninsular War, in proportion to the numbers engaged, everybody knows. But the exact table of the losses on each side has never, I believe, been fully worked out. After studying the French returns in the Archives of the Paris Ministry of War and the Spanish figures at Madrid, no less than Beresford's report, we get to the results which I have printed in the XVth Appendix to this volume.

Summarizing them, we find that the British, including Alten's German battalions, had 10,449 men on the field. Their total loss was 206 officers and 3,953 men. Of these 882 were killed, 2,733 wounded, and 544 missing. Of this frightful casualty list no less than five-sixths belonged to the three brigades of Colborne, Hoghton, and Myers, for the cavalry and artillery, with Alten's and Abercrombie's brigades of infantry, though all

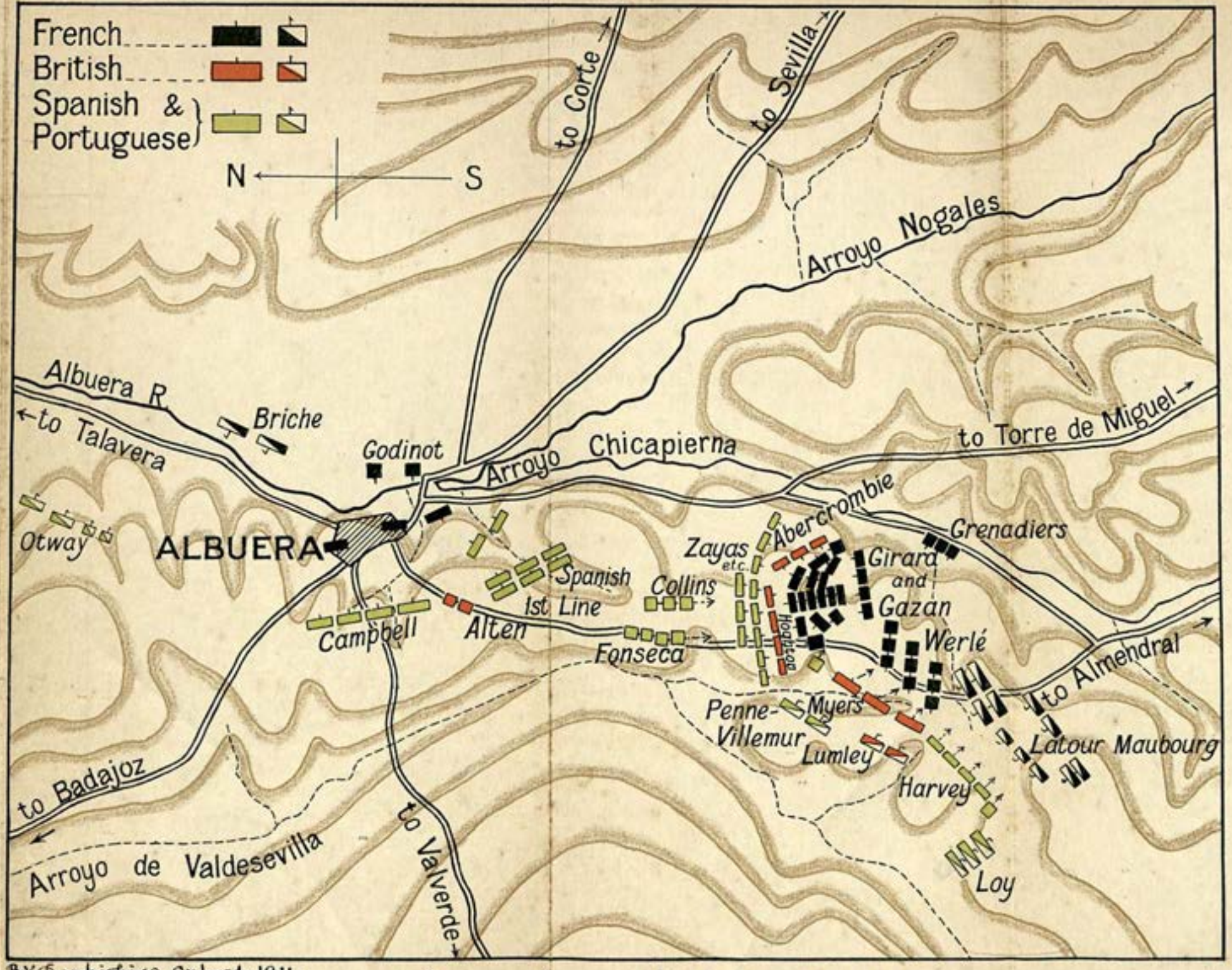
seriously engaged, lost but 618 out of nearly 4,500 men present. The remaining 3,502 casualties all came from the ranks of the three first-named brigades, whose total strength on the field was but 5,732. Colborne's brigade lost, in an instant as it were, under the charge of the lancers and hussars, seven-tenths of its numbers, 1,400 men out of 2,000. Of the 600 who were left standing, nearly half belonged to the 2/31st, the battalion which was not broken by the cavalry charge, and survived to join in Hoghton's advance. The brigades of Hoghton and Myers were not, like Colborne's, annihilated in one awful moment of disaster, but used up in continuous fighting at short musketry range, with an enemy of far superior numbers. The former (29th, 1/48th, 2/57th) took 1,650 officers and men into the field, and lost 1,044. The latter (the two battalions of the 7th Royal Fusiliers and the 1st battalion of the Welsh Fusiliers) had 2,015 combatants present, and lost 1,045. Hoghton's troops, therefore, lost five-eighths, Myers's one-half of their strength, and these were victorious units which hardly left a single prisoner in the enemy's hands, and finally drove their adversaries from the field in spite of a twofold inequality of numbers. Truly Albuera is the most honourable of all Peninsular blazons on a regimental flag.

Of the 10,000 Portuguese, only Harvey's brigade was seriously engaged; it had over 200 casualties [1] out of the 389 suffered on that day by troops of that nation, and established a most honourable record by its defeat of Latour-Maubourg's dragoons. The other men killed or hurt were distributed in fives and tens over the battalions of Fonseca, Collins, and Campbell, which only came under fire in the last stage of the battle.

The Spaniards returned 1,368 casualties out of 14,000 present, of which (as we have already seen) no less than 615 were in those four battalions of Zayas's division which held out so stubbornly against the 5th Corps, till Hoghton's men came up to relieve them. Of the rest, Ballasteros's and Lardizabal's divisions, with under 300 casualties each, had only suffered from

[1] Of which no less than 171 were in the battalion of the Lusitanian Legion which formed Cole's flank-guard on the left: it suffered terribly from artillery fire.

ALBUERA . Nº 2 (About 11.30 a.m.)



B.V. Barbishire, Oxford, 1911.

SCALE 0 ½ ENGLISH MILE

Note.—There should be only two, not three, battalions of Grenadiers placed as reserve behind Girard and Gazan's troops.

skirmishing or distant artillery fire. The losses of Carlos de España and the cavalry were insignificant.

The French losses can be made out with reasonable certainty after careful comparison of different returns in the Paris Archives. Soult had the shamelessness to assert in his dispatch to the Emperor that he had only 2,800 killed and wounded! But a tardily prepared and incomplete list drawn up on July 6th gave 6,000 casualties, of whom 900 were missing—wounded prisoners left on the allied position. Unfortunately this return, on examination, turns out to be far from satisfactory. Soult gives 262 officers killed, wounded, or missing, but the regimental returns when compiled show a much higher figure—359—and cannot possibly be wrong, since the name and rank of every officer hit is carefully recorded for documentary and official purposes.[1] But if 262 casualties among officers correspond (as the return of July 6th states) to 5,744 among the rank and file, then 362 officers hit must imply 7,900 men disabled, and this, we may conclude, was very near the real figure. Belmas and Lapène, the most trustworthy French historians of the campaign, agree in giving 7,000, a thousand more than Soult conceded in his tardy and incomplete return. This proportion out of 24,000 men put in the field is sufficiently heavy, though exceeded so terribly by the 4,150 men lost out of 10,450 among the British troops. The units which suffered most heavily were the two divisions of the 5th Corps, which must have lost nearly 4,000 out of 8,400 present; Werlé's reserve had probably close on 2,000 casualties, out of 5,600 bayonets; Godinot's column and the cavalry had very considerable losses, but were the only troops fit for action next day. The 5th Corps was absolutely wrecked; in some battalions there were only three or four officers unhurt, and the losses were similar to those in Myers's or Hoghton's British brigades[2]. Two or three others had fared comparatively better, having been in the flank or rear at the time when the desperate musketry duel in the front was in progress. But the corps as a whole could not have been put in action on the 17th.

On the morning of that day each army sullenly formed line on

[1] See Appendix XVI.

[2] For details see Appendix XVI.

its own side of the Albuera brook, but made no further movement. Beresford was prepared to fight another defensive battle, in the unlikely event of its being forced upon him [1], but was not willing to attack an enemy hidden behind a screen of woods, and possessed of a superior and still effective cavalry and artillery. Such an attack must have been delivered mainly by the Spanish and Portuguese infantry, since of the British only Abercrombie's and Alten's five battalions were fit for immediate service. The missing brigade of Kemmis arrived during the day, after a fatiguing march over the Jerumenha bridge, and added 1,400 bayonets more, but even so there would have been only 4,000 British infantry in full fighting trim; the sad relics of Hoghton's and Colborne's brigades were organized into two provisional battalions of 600 men each, where whole regiments were represented by one, two, or, at the most, three companies. Myers's brigade had 1,000 men left, so was better off, but no general would have dreamed of using any of these troops for offensive action on the day after the battle. An attack would have had to be delivered by the 9,000 Portuguese infantry, backed by the Spaniards and Abercrombie, Alten, and Kemmis. Beresford refused to try it, even though he knew that Soult's losses had been greater than his own, so far as mere numbers went; probably, he argued, Soult would retire covered by his cavalry and artillery if he were assailed. Covered by the woods, he could get off as he pleased. But Soult was certain to retire in any case, as news had now come to hand that Wellington was coming down to Elvas with two divisions [2], and might be expected there immediately—he actually arrived on the 19th; the head of his column had marched on the 14th, and reached Elvas on the 23rd. To risk anything in order to get Soult on the move a few days earlier was not worth while.

The French marshal was even further than Beresford from

[1] D'Urban in his diary under the 17th first speaks of an attack by Soult being possible, and then concludes it impossible; Kemmis's arrival he thinks will have cured the Marshal of any idea of returning to the fight.

[2] His intention to come appears in his letter to Beresford of May 13th, received May 17th. The statement that the 3rd Division and other troops had actually started for Estremadura is in his letter of May 14th, received May 18th. *Wellington Dispatches*, vii. 549 and 555.

the idea of renewing operations on the 17th; he had shot his bolt and failed—the battle, so he declared, would never have been fought if he had known that Blake had joined the British on the night of the 15th. His main object in keeping his ground for a day was to organize the transport of a column of 5,000 wounded on to Seville; if he had retired at once, the greater part of them would have had to be abandoned. As it was, his transport was used up, and several hundreds of severe cases had to be left to the mercy of the Allies, in and about the chapel in the wood of Albuera. Beresford found them there on the morning of the 18th, for Soult commenced his retreat before dawn, some thirty-six hours after the battle was over. Gazan (himself wounded) and some 2,000 men from the regiments which had been most cut up guarded the convoy (which included the 500 British prisoners)[1], southward along the great *chaussée*. Soult himself, with the rest of the army, now reduced to 14,000 men at the most, retired by a more circuitous route, by Solana and Fuente del Maestre towards Llerena and the Sierra Morena. Beresford's cavalry followed, but was unable to do anything in face of Latour-Maubourg's preponderant squadrons. The allied infantry remained behind to resume the siege of Badajoz; on the 18th Hamilton's division and Madden's cavalry were sent back to invest the place, which was shut in again at dawn on the 19th, after having been relieved of the presence of the Allies for only three days (16th–17th–18th May). General Phillipon had employed this short respite in the useful task of levelling the allied trenches and batteries outside his works. He found nothing in them of which he could make booty, save the heavy wood employed for the gun-platforms before San Cristobal. The more valuable stores had all been removed to Elvas, the gabions and fascines burned by the 4th Division before it gave up the investment on the night of the 15th May.

That Albuera, with all its slaughter, was a battle in which both sides committed serious errors is generally acknowledged; but few are the general actions in which there is nothing to criticize on the part of the victor—much more of the vanquished.

[1] Of whom more than 200 escaped, and joined their regiments during the next four days, for their guards were too exhausted to keep good watch.

We must, however, protest against Napier's sweeping assertion that 'no general ever gained so great a battle with so little increase of military reputation as Marshal Beresford[1]. His triumph was disputed by the very soldiers who followed his car. Their censures have been reiterated without change and without abatement to this hour, and a close examination (while it detects many ill-founded observations and others tainted with malice) leaves little doubt that the general feeling was right[2].' Napier then proceeds to argue that Beresford ought to have refused battle, and retired beyond the Guadiana, that his concentration was over-tardy, and that, considering the doubtful quality of Blake's troops, he was too bold in fighting. His tactical dispositions were bad; 'he occupied the position so as to render defeat almost certain'; he brought up his reserves in a succession of separate attacks, and hesitated too long to move the 4th Division. 'Hardinge caused Cole and Abercrombie to win the victory;' the guidance of a commanding mind was nowhere seen.

Napier was Beresford's bitter enemy, and it is clear that his eloquent denunciations of the Marshal were inspired by a personal animosity which clouded his judgement. His account of Albuera is one of the finest pieces of military writing in the English language, but it bristles with mistakes, many of them worked in so as to throw additional discredit on his enemy's capacity[3].

[1] If any one wants an example of such a battle, he may take the first great fight of Frederick the Great, who had been driven ten miles off the battlefield with the wreck of his cavalry when news came to him that his infantry, in his absence and without his leadership, had won the battle for him.

[2] *Peninsular War*, iii. p. 175.

[3] Such as the statement that Zayas had given way before Colborne arrived at the front, which the evidence of Beresford himself, d'Urban, Schepeler, Moyle Sherer, and many other witnesses proves to be quite wrong. Also the tale (p. 167) that the Spaniards fired into the British (see *Strictures*, pp. 247-8, and Schepeler). Also the statement that Lumley's cavalry diversion to help Colborne was successful—when it merely resulted in the repulse of the two squadrons that made it, with the loss of their two commanding officers (Captains Spedding and Phillips) taken prisoners.

An astonishing bit of arithmetic is the note (iii. p. 181) that on the night of the battle only 1,800 unwounded British infantry were left standing—the real figures being: Abercrombie, 1,200; Alten, 1,100; remains of Myers's brigade, 1,000; remains of Colborne's brigade, 600;

One turns naturally to investigate Wellington's observations on the fight, made when he had ridden over the field on May 21st, only five days after the battle. In one private letter he writes, 'We had a very good position, and I think should have gained a complete victory without any material loss, if the Spaniards could have manœuvred; but unfortunately they cannot.' In another he says, 'The Spanish troops behaved admirably, I understand. They stood like stocks while both parties were firing into them, but they were quite immovable, and this was the great cause of all our losses. After they had lost their position, the natural thing to do would have been to attack it with the nearest Spanish troops, but these could not be moved. The British troops [2nd Division] were next, and they were brought up (and must in such cases always be brought up), and they suffered accordingly.'

Wellington's opinion therefore was that Blake's slowness in guarding against the flank attack was the real cause of all the trouble. Considering the gallant way in which Zayas's four battalions fought, when once they were in line, it certainly seems that if thrice the force which that officer was given had been thrown back *en potence* across the heights, as Beresford desired, at the moment that Soult's movement was detected, they would have held their own so effectively that the British 2nd Division could have come up at leisure, and in order, to support the Spaniards. As it was, the reinforcements sent over-late by Blake to help Zayas arrived by driblets, and gave him little help, falling into a mere *tiraillade* with the French light troops on Zayas's left, instead of engaging in the main battle.

After Blake's slowness the main cause of loss was William Stewart's over-haste. Beresford had given orders that the whole 2nd Division was to form up in a second line behind Zayas, and go into action simultaneously, outflanking the massed 5th Corps on either wing. Stewart, combining over-zeal and want of discipline, attacked with the first brigade that came up, while the second and the third were still remote. He also, if several contemporaries are to be trusted, refused to listen to Colonel Colborne's request to be allowed to keep a unit in square or

ditto of Hoghton's, 600. Total, 4,500. Napier had apparently forgotten Abercrombie and Alten.

column, to protect the flank of the 1st brigade when it started out to make its attack [1], and it was the want of this flank-guard alone which made the charge of the Polish lancers so effective. As Beresford's vindicator writes, 'The Marshal had directed Sir William Stewart to form the second line; he could not distrust an officer of his experience, zeal, and knowledge of the service.' That his subordinate should be struck with sudden battle-fury, and attack the French flank with one isolated brigade, contrary to his orders, cannot be imputed as a crime to Beresford, who was in no way responsible for it. The move, and the disaster that followed within a few minutes, took place without his knowledge. As he was endeavouring to put in line the Spanish battalions which were coming up to reinforce Zayas, he was surprised by being charged in the midst of his staff by a knot of the lancers, who a minute before had ridden over Colborne's men on his right. It is clear that if the three brigades of the 2nd Division had been properly arranged and put into action simultaneously, as Beresford intended, the 5th Corps would have been driven from the heights an hour before it actually yielded. Girard's division had already wellnigh exhausted itself upon Zayas's stubborn resistance, and it was only the interval in the allied attack, caused by the destruction of Colborne's brigade, which permitted Gazan's troops to get up into the front line, in such order as they could, in time to fight Hoghton and Abercrombie. If Stewart's advance had been made at the proper time, he would have come upon the two French divisions at the very moment when they were making their confused change of front. They could not have resisted the assault, considering the disorder in which they were mingled. Soult, who had just made up his mind to discontinue the offensive battle in which he was engaged [2], would certainly have used Werlé's reserve only to cover his retreat, and would have withdrawn from a position which had become desperate, covered by his cavalry.

The one point in which Napier's charges against Beresford have some foundation is that there was undoubtedly much delay in putting Cole and the 4th Division into action. This, as we have shown above, was caused by Beresford's wish to strike the

[1] *Strictures*, p. 243.

[2] See p. 388 above.

final blow at the 5th Corps with Hamilton's Portuguese, whom he had ordered to the front after Colborne's disaster, and who did not make their appearance, partly because the first aide-de-camp sent for them was wounded on the way, partly because Hamilton had changed his position, and was not found at once by later messengers. When it became evident that the delay was growing dangerous, Beresford would have done well to send Cole orders to advance at once, and to have directed Abercrombie also to charge. Napier is right in saying that 'Hardinge caused Cole to win the victory,' for Cole's advance was made without Beresford's orders, and even contrary to his intention, since he had sent for Alten and the Portuguese to make the final stroke. But while they were being collected, Hoghton's brigade had been practically used up, and there was nothing but Zayas's reformed but exhausted battalions in Hoghton's rear, to form the allied centre. It is true, however, that, supposing the last relics of the 'Die-hards' and their comrades had finally recoiled, there would have been no push or impetus left in their opponents of the 5th Corps, who were a spent force, in complete disorder, and with hardly one man in two left standing. While they were disentangling themselves for a final effort, Collins's and Fonseca's Portuguese, perfectly trustworthy troops and absolutely fresh, would have been getting into position. It is practically certain that Soult would have made no further attempt to go forward. His own dispatch states that he had abandoned all offensive intentions. This much Beresford's advocates may plead; but it remains true that the moral impression of Albuera would have been very different if the charge of the Fusilier brigade had never taken place. It was their triumphant sweeping away of Werlé's reserve which struck dismay into the enemy. If it had never occurred, Soult would have retired, foiled indeed, but in good order, and with two or three thousand fewer casualties than he actually suffered.

In criticizing the operations of the French, the main point which strikes us is that Soult stands self-convicted of hesitation and divided purpose in the crisis of the battle. His attack had been admirable; the movement which threw four-fifths of his available force unexpectedly on to Beresford's flank was beautifully designed and carried out. But when, in the check and

pause that followed the incident of Colborne's disaster, he realized (as he himself says) that he had 30,000 men and not 20,000 to fight, and that 'the odds were no longer fair,' he should have made up his mind either to withdraw under cover of his splendid cavalry, or else to risk all, and throw his infantry reserves straight into the fight, before the enemy's line was reformed. He did neither, but, as he says, 'giving up his original project, aimed at nothing more than retaining the ground already won.' What use was half a mile of hillside to him, if he had failed to break the Allies and drive them off the position which covered the road to Badajoz? He deserved the beating that he got for this extraordinary resolve.

As to the details of the French tactics, Girard was responsible for the dense order of the 5th Corps, which told so fatally on his men. But in arranging them as he did, he was but adopting the method that most other French generals were wont to use. Accustomed to break through the lines of Continental armies by the impetus of a solid mass, and not by musketry fire, he prepared to employ the normal shock-tactics of the 'column of divisions.' It may be even noticed that, more enlightened than many of his comrades, he used the *ordre mixte* recommended by Napoleon, in which some battalions in three-deep line were interspersed among the columns. His array was better than that of Victor at Barrosa or Talavera, or that of Reynier and Ney at Bussaco. But he had never met the British line before —this was the first time that the 5th Corps saw the red-coats— and he did not know the unwelcome truth that Reille told Napoleon before Waterloo: 'Sire, l'infanterie anglaise en duel c'est le diable.' There was, no doubt, extra confusion caused by the fact that the 2nd Division of the corps closed up too near to the first, so that the *passage des lignes*, when it was brought up to the front with the idea of passing it through the intervals of the shattered regiments of the van, was even more disorderly than was necessary. But the crucial mistake, repeated by every French general throughout the war, was to come on in column at all against the British line. Girard did no worse than his contemporaries, and the gallant obstinacy of his troops enabled him to inflict very heavy losses upon the victors.

Latour-Maubourg has sometimes been accused of making

insufficient use of his great mass of cavalry. But till the last stage of the battle he had in front of him not merely Lumley's squadrons, but the whole 4th Division. To attack a force of all arms, in a good position, with cavalry alone would have been dangerous. If he had failed, the flank of the 5th Corps would have been laid open in the most disastrous fashion. Probably he was right to be satisfied in 'containing' with his 3,500 horse 7,000 men, 5,000 of them good infantry, belonging to the enemy. His brilliant stroke at Colborne's brigade is enough to save his reputation as a battle-general, though (as we have said before) he was no strategist. By this alone he had done more for Soult than any other French officer upon the field.

The real hero, most undoubtedly, of the whole fight was Sir Lowry Cole, who showed as much moral courage in striking in, on his own responsibility, at the critical moment, as he did practical skill in conducting his two brigades against the enemy opposed to him—a most formidable adversary who showed twenty-six squadrons of cavalry opposed to one of his wings, and the 5,600 bayonets of Werlé's infantry opposed to the other. With Harvey's Portuguese he drove off the cavalry charge, with Myers's Fusiliers he beat to pieces the heavy columns of the French reserve. It was a great achievement, and the General was worthy of his soldiers, no less than the soldiers of their General. He was well seconded by Lumley, who justified in the most splendid way his sudden appointment to the command of the cavalry of the whole army only a few hours before the battle.

NOTE

The result of a four hours' visit to the field of Albuera, on a very hot day in April 1907, was to prove to me that Napier had no idea of its topography, while Beresford in his *Strictures on Colonel Napier's History*, 1833, describes it very well. I could see no trace of several things on which Napier lays stress, especially the 'ravine' behind the British position. Nearly the whole of the field is now arable—it was covered thickly with small red poppies, when I visited it, in which four ploughs were cutting long seams, turning up a thin soil of a chocolate brown hue.

SECTION XXVII

WELLINGTON'S FIRST ESTREMADURAN CAMPAIGN

CHAPTER I

THE SECOND BRITISH SIEGE OF BADAJOZ, MAY–JUNE 1811

The short ten-day campaign of Fuentes de Oñoro had not been without important results, but it had left the general strategical aspect of affairs in the Peninsula unaltered. Almeida had fallen, and it had been demonstrated that the French Army of Portugal was not strong enough to force back Wellington from the frontier, where he had taken post. On the other hand, it was equally clear that Wellington was far too weak to dream of taking the offensive in the valley of the Douro, or marching on Salamanca. Such a movement would have brought 20,000 men from the Army of the North to the aid of the Army of Portugal, and the allied army on the northern frontier was barely superior in numbers to the latter alone, even when the 9th Corps had departed for Andalusia. To provoke the enemy to concentrate would have been insane; if he were left alone, however, it was improbable that he would prove dangerous for many a day. Marmont had to complete the reorganization of the army which he had just taken over from Masséna; it would be some months before he could replace the lost cavalry and artillery, fill up his magazines, and finish the reclothing of his tattered regiments. Bessières was so much occupied with the guerrilleros that he would not draw his troops together, unless he were obliged to do so by an advance of the Allies towards his territory. He had, moreover, to keep covering forces out to north and west, in order to watch Abadia's Galician army, and Longa and Porlier, who still made head against him in the Cantabrian Mountains. It was probable,

therefore, that the French in Leon and Old Castile would keep quiet for some time unless they were provoked. Wellington resolved to leave them unmolested, and to endeavour to strike a blow in the south.

On the day when the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro was fought, Beresford, with the 20,000 men who had been detached to Estremadura, was, as Wellington knew, just about to commence the siege of Badajoz. It was certain that this enterprise would bring Soult and his Army of Andalusia to the succour of the fortress. The line of conduct which Beresford was to pursue when Soult should appear had been already settled—he was to fight if the enemy were weak, to retire behind the Guadiana if he were strong [1]. But meanwhile it was now possible to reinforce Beresford with 10,000 men, since Marmont and Bessières would be out of the game for many weeks. Leaving nearly 30,000 men on the Dos Casas and the Coa, to protect the Portuguese frontier and to guard the repairing of Almeida, Wellington could march to join the Army of Estremadura with the balance of his army. He thought that two divisions could be spared, and chose the 3rd and the 7th. If he marched rapidly across the Beira with this force, he might arrive in time to join Beresford for the battle against Soult which was inevitable. It might take place south of the Guadiana, if the French Marshal had delayed his advance, or north of it, if he had come up in great force and had compelled Beresford to give back toward Elvas, and to abandon the siege of Badajoz. But in either case Beresford's army, reinforced by 10,000 men, would be strong enough to beat Soult. The only possible contingency to be feared was that the Duke of Dalmatia might abandon Granada and the Lines before Cadiz, concentrate 50,000 men, and let Andalusia shift for itself while he marched on Badajoz. Wellington judged, and rightly, that it was most improbable that he would make this desperate move, and evacuate three-fourths of his viceroyalty, in order to make certain of saving Badajoz. Knowing the strength of Beresford and Castaños, he would come with the 20,000 or 25,000 men that he could collect without disgarrisoning any points of primary importance. In such a case, supposing that he came with the higher figure.

[1] See pp. 280–1.

Beresford had 20,000 Anglo-Portuguese, 10,000 more were coming down from the Beira, and there were the Spaniards of Blake and of Castaños to be taken into consideration. Soult would find himself faced by 45,000 men, and could not possibly prevent the siege of Badajoz from proceeding. If the place could be taken promptly, there would be no time for reinforcements to reach the Marshal from the Army of Portugal or the Army of the Centre: and should he finally resolve to draw up further forces from Andalusia, he must abandon either the kingdom of Granada or the Cadiz lines, or both. To force him to give up his grasp on either of these points would be a great end in itself, and a sufficient reward for a successful campaign.

But everything depended on swift movement and the economy of time. Should Soult refuse to fight, and resolve to appeal for help to the other French armies, it was certain that 50,000 men might be gathered to his aid within a month or five weeks. All the Anglo-Portuguese troops combined, supposing that every man were drawn in from the north to join Beresford, would not make up over 60,000 sabres and bayonets. On the other hand, a junction between the Armies of Andalusia and Portugal, with aid lent by Bessières and the Army of the Centre, could certainly produce 80,000 men, perhaps more. Wherefore it might be argued that if Badajoz could be taken in a month a great success might be scored. But if the siege were to linger on over that time, the enemy would be able to concentrate in such force that the enterprise might become impracticable. The game was worth trying.

Wellington's dispatches to Lord Liverpool and other correspondents between the 14th and the 25th of May make it perfectly clear that these were his views. 'Fortunately for me,' he wrote, 'the French armies have no communications, and one army has no knowledge of the position or of the circumstances in which the others are placed, whereas I have a knowledge of all that passes on all sides.' From this knowledge I think I may draw troops from Beira for my operations against Badajoz. But I cannot venture further south till I shall get Ciudad Rodrigo, without exposing all to ruin[1].' Again, 'I do not think it possible for me to undertake more in the south, under

[1] To Lord Liverpool, May 23.

existing circumstances, than the siege of Badajoz. I cannot, by any effort I can make, increase the British and Portuguese [in that quarter] beyond 30,000 men, to which the Spanish force may add 8,000 or 10,000 more[1].' He was perfectly aware that a concentration against him was possible, but that it would take a long time to come about. 'I do not know when Marmont can be ready to co-operate with Soult; however, as the siege of Badajoz can be raised with ease and without loss, whenever it may be necessary, I have thought it best to lose no time, and to adopt every means to get that place, if I can, before the enemy's troops can join. If I cannot get it, I may raise the siege and fight a battle or not, as I may find most proper, according to the state of our respective forces[2].' It is clear, then, that Wellington's utmost ambition was to take Badajoz, and that he foresaw that he must take it within a limited time, under penalty of seeing the scheme fail owing to the concentration of the enemy. His letters show that he knew that Drouet and the 9th Corps had started for Andalusia immediately after Fuentes de Oñoro, and in calculating Soult's utmost available force in June he takes Drouet into account[3], though he somewhat under-values his numerical strength.

The garrison of Almeida had made its escape on the night of May 10th–11th; the French army had drawn back beyond Ciudad Rodrigo, and dispersed itself into cantonments, on May 12th. As early as the morning of May 14th the column destined for Estremadura set out upon its march. It consisted, as has been already mentioned, of the 3rd and 7th Divisions, with the artillery attached to them. For the purpose of providing cavalry for scouting and exploration, the 2nd Hussars of the King's German Legion were attached. This corps was the first cavalry reinforcement that Wellington had received for more than a year. It had landed at Lisbon in April[4], and had marched up to Celorico; from thence it was ordered to strike across country, to join the column marching for the valley

[1] To Beresford, May 14. The 30,000 total allows for Spencer and four divisions being left in the North.

[2] To Lord Liverpool, May 24. [3] To Lord Liverpool, May 23.

[4] Apparently on April 10, according to Schwertfeger's *History of the German Legion*, i. 329.

of the Guadiana, and to place itself at the disposition of Picton, its senior officer. They met at Belmonte, and went on their southward way in company. The route lay through Castello Branco, the boat-bridge of Villa Velha, Niza, and Portalegre. Picton reached Campo Mayor, in the immediate vicinity of Badajoz, on May 24th, having taken ten days only to cross the roughest and most thinly peopled corner of Portugal. The average of marching had been fifteen miles a day, an excellent rate when the character of the roads is taken into consideration.

Wellington himself started from Villar Formoso two days after the departure of the troops, on May 16th, and riding with his accustomed headlong speed reached Elvas on the afternoon of May 19th[1]. He had passed Picton between Sabugal and Belmonte. Before quitting the line of the Agueda, he drew up elaborate instructions for Sir Brent Spencer, who was left, as usual, in charge of the army on the northern frontier. The force entrusted to Spencer consisted of the 1st, 5th, 6th, and Light Divisions, Pack's and Ashworth's Portuguese brigades, and the cavalry of Slade, Arentschildt, and Barbaçena, altogether about 26,000 foot and 1,800 horse. The directions left were much the same as those which had been issued during Wellington's earlier visit to Estremadura in April. 'It is probable that some time will elapse before the French army in this part of Spain will be capable of making any movement against the Allies.' Yet the unexpected might happen, and Spencer was told that, while so large a detachment was absent in the south, he must adopt a purely defensive attitude in the unlikely event of Marmont's taking the field against him. For the present he was to hold the line of the Azava, facing Ciudad Rodrigo, with his advanced posts. The divisions were to be cantoned between Almeida and Nava de Aver, so that they could be concentrated in a single day. If the enemy should advance with a large force, as if intending a serious invasion, Almeida was to be evacuated, since it would be impossible that the repairs to its ruined ramparts should have got far enough to render the place tenable. The army was to fall back, not westward towards Almeida and

[1] He outrode his own estimate, since according to a letter to Charles Stuart (*Dispatches*, vii. 572) he had intended not to reach Elvas till the 21st, 'unless I see reason on the road to go a little quicker.'

THE THIRD DIVISION CROSSING THE TAGUS AT VILLA VELHA, MAY 20, 1811

Guarda, but southwards, firstly to the position before Alfayates which had already been marked out in April, then to a second position at Aldea Velha and Rendo, then to a third beyond the Coa. In case Marmont should push even further, the line of retreat was to be from Sabugal to Belmonte, and finally by the mountain road of the Estrada Nova towards the Zezere. 'But the strong country between Belmonte and the Zezere must not be given up in a hurry[1].' All this was pure precaution against the improbable: Wellington was convinced, and quite rightly, that Marmont would be incapable for some weeks, probably for some months, of any serious offensive action against Portugal. To invade the Beira he would have to collect a store of provisions such as the exhausted kingdom of Leon could not possibly give him. His magazines were known to have been empty after Fuentes de Oñoro, and his troops had been dispersed because there was no possibility of feeding them while they were concentrated. Spencer could be in no possible danger for many a day; so strongly did Wellington feel this, that when he reached Elvas he wrote back to his lieutenant on May 24th that he intended to borrow from him Howard's British and Ashworth's Portuguese brigades, and thought that this could be done without any risk. But if, 'notwithstanding my expectations to the contrary,' Marmont seemed to be on the move, the brigades might be stopped[2].

Just before starting on his ride from Villar Formoso to Elvas Wellington received Beresford's dispatches of May 12, which informed him that Soult (as had been expected) was on the march from Seville to relieve Badajoz, and that, according to the instructions that had been given, the allied army of Estremadura would fight him, if he were not too strong to be meddled with. It was the news that battle was impending which made the Commander-in-Chief quicken his pace to fifty miles a day, in hopes that he might be in time to take charge of the troops in person. He galloped ahead, and on the morning of the 19th heard, between Niza and Elvas, that there had been a pitched battle on the 16th, and that Soult had been repulsed. The

[1] Memorandum for Spencer, dated May 15th, the night before Wellington's departure. *Dispatches*, vii. p. 567.

[2] To Spencer, May 24. *Dispatches*, vii. p. 602.

details met him at Elvas, where Arbuthnot, Beresford's aide-de-camp, handed him the Albuera dispatch. He read it through, and struck out some paragraphs before sending it on to the Ministry at home. The reason for these erasures was that he considered that Beresford's tone was a little too desponding, and that he had laid too much stress on the terrible loss of the British troops, and too little on the complete check to Soult's designs[1]. He wrote to the Marshal to hearten him up, to tell him that the result achieved had been worth the cost. 'You could not be successful in such an action without a large loss, and we must make up our mind to affairs of this kind sometimes—or give up the game[2].'

With the military situation that he found in existence on May 19th Wellington professed himself satisfied. Hamilton's Portuguese division had reinvested Badajoz on the preceding day. Soult was in full retreat, with the allied cavalry in pursuit of him. It was uncertain whether he would fall back on Seville or halt at the line of the Sierra Morena; but at any rate his bolt was shot: he could give no trouble for some weeks, and would only become dangerous if he strengthened his army by calling up Sebastiani and Victor, and evacuating the Cadiz Lines and Granada. This Wellington rightly believed that he would not think of doing. He would rather cry for aid to his neighbours, and it would take a long time for reinforcements to reach him from the Army of Portugal or from Madrid. There was a month in hand, and Badajoz must be captured if possible within that space.

The first thing necessary was to push Soult as far back as he would go, and from the 20th to the 26th Beresford was engaged in following him up. At first only the cavalry was available for pursuit: Hamilton's division had been sent back to Badajoz; the 2nd and 4th were allowed five days of repose on the battle-field of Albuera. Not only were they absolutely exhausted, but

[1] This is mentioned by Wellington himself (Stanhope's *Conversations*, p. 90): 'He could not stand the slaughter about him and the vast responsibility: the letter was quite in a desponding tone. It was brought me by Arbuthnot while I was at dinner at Elvas, and I said, "This won't do: write me down a victory." So the dispatch was altered accordingly.'

[2] Wellington to Beresford, May 19, 4.30 p.m.

all their transport was engaged in the heart-rending task of forwarding to Elvas convoy after convoy of British wounded. The French, of whom the last were not collected till three days after the battle, were packed in an extemporized hospital at Albuera village, where they suffered much for lack of surgeons. It would have been possible to send Blake's army to support the British cavalry if he had possessed provisions, but he reported that his men were starving, and that he must disperse them to procure food; accordingly they were sent to Almendral, Barcarrota, and the neighbouring villages, to gather stores as best they might.

Soult meanwhile gave back slowly, being hampered by his immense convoys of wounded. On the 20th he retired from Solana to Almendralejo and Azeuchal, on the 21st to Villafranca and Fuente del Maestre; on the 22nd he was in march for Usagre and Llerena, so that it was evident that he was retiring on the Sierra Morena by the Llerena and not by the Monasterio road. It was only on this last day that Beresford's infantry were able to start in support of the cavalry advanced guard, which had been cautiously following on Soult's track. The Albuera divisions were sad wrecks of their former selves; the 2nd had but 2,500 bayonets in its three brigades, the 4th about 2,200 British and 2,500 Portuguese; Alten's German brigade was less than 1,000 strong, so that the whole did not make up much more than 8,000 men. But Blake was requested to move on Feria and Zafra, parallel to the advance of the British column, and did so, having collected a few days' provisions in his cantonments. The whole force was sufficient to move Soult back, since his troops were in a despondent humour, and did not amount to more than 13,000 or 14,000 men, for he had been forced to detach a brigade under Gazan to escort his immense train of wounded back to Seville. But the allied infantry never came up with the retreating French; by the time that it had reached Villalba and Fuente del Maestre Soult was at Llerena, thirty miles ahead.

The last day of his retreat was marked by a vigorous cavalry action, the most satisfactory of its kind that the British horse in the Peninsula had been engaged in since the combats of Sahagun and Benavente. Having reached Llerena, where he intended to

stop if he were allowed, Soult determined to find out what was the force which was pursuing him, and more especially if it were accompanied by infantry. He instructed Latour-Maubourg to turn back, to attack the allied horse, and to drive it in upon its supports. Accordingly the French cavalry general took the four brigades of Bron, Bouvier des Éclats, Vinot, and Briche [1], some 3,000 sabres in all, and began to advance along the high-road. He found in Villa Garcia the enemy's advanced vedettes, composed of Penne Villemur's Spaniards, drove them out, and pursued them for five miles, till he came to the town of Usagre, where he caught a glimpse of supports in position. He had run against the main body of the allied horse, though he could not make out either its strength or its intentions.

General Lumley, who was thus thrown upon the defensive, had with him his three original British cavalry regiments (3rd Dragoon Guards, 4th Dragoons, 13th Light Dragoons), four small regiments of Madden's and Otway's Portuguese [2], and a detachment of Penne Villemur's Spanish horse under General Loy [3], about 2,200 sabres in all, so that his position was a dangerous one. But the fighting-ground was propitious. Usagre lies on the south bank of the stream, which flows in a well-marked ravine; on the north bank there are two rolling heights a few hundred yards back from the water, with a definite sky-line. Troops placed behind them were invisible to an enemy coming up from the town, and the French, if they wished to attack, would have to defile on a narrow front, first through the main street of Usagre, and then across the bridge.

On hearing of Latour-Maubourg's approach, Lumley sent the 13th Light Dragoons and Otway's Portuguese across the ravine to the left of the town, and Madden's Portuguese in like manner on the right, each using a ford which had been previously discovered and sounded. The heavy dragoons remained facing the

[1] Bron's brigade was composed of the 4th, 20th, 26th Dragoons, Bouvier's of the 14th, 17th, 27th Dragoons, Vinot's of the 2nd Hussars and 27th *chasseurs*, Briche's of the 10th Hussars and 21st *chasseurs*.

[2] 1st, 5th, 7th, 8th of the Line, only 9 squadrons altogether, and slightly over 1,000 sabres.

[3] Apparently a squadron each of Borbon and Reyna, the rest of the Spanish cavalry being on the Monasterio Road. Penne Villemur was sick at Villafranca. Strength about 300 sabres.

town, behind the sky-line, with Lefebure's battery, guarding the high-road. Both the flanking forces reported that the enemy was coming up the road in great strength—Lumley was told that thirteen regiments had been counted, though there were really only ten. Wherefore he ordered Otway and Madden to recross the stream by their fords, which they did without loss, and to watch these passages, while keeping well under cover behind the sky-line.

Latour-Maubourg could not make out the force or the intentions of the Allies; he had seen clearly only the Spanish vedettes which he had driven out of Usagre; but Madden's and Otway's squadrons had not escaped notice altogether, though they retired early, so that he was aware that a hostile force of some strength was lying behind the heights. He therefore resolved not to debouch from Usagre along the high-road with his main body, across the defile at the bridge, till he had got a flanking force across the stream, to threaten and turn Lumley, if he were intending to defend the line along the water. Briche's brigade of light horse was told off for this purpose, with orders to go to the right, down-stream, and to pass the river at the ford which Otway's Portuguese had been seen to use in their retreat. Meanwhile the other three French brigades waited in Usagre, deferring their advance till the *chasseurs* should have time to get on Lumley's flank.

The two forces did not keep touch. Briche went for a mile along the river, and found the ford; but Otway was guarding it, and he did not like to try the passage of a steep ravine in face of an enemy in position. Wherefore he moved further off, looking for a more practicable and unguarded crossing; but the banks grew steeper and steeper as he rode northward, and he found that he was losing time. He was long absent, and apparently committed the inexcusable fault of omitting to send any report explaining his long delay. After waiting for more than an hour Latour-Maubourg became impatient, and fell into an equally grave military error. Taking it for granted that the *chasseurs* must now be in their destined position, he ordered his division of dragoons to debouche from the town and cross the stream and the defile. Bron's brigade led; the two regiments in front, the 4th and 20th, trotted over the bridge, and deployed

on the other side, on an ascending slope, to cover the passage of the remainder of the division. The third regiment of the brigade, the 26th, was just crossing the bridge, when suddenly the whole sky-line in front was covered with a long line of horsemen charging downwards. Lumley had waited till the propitious moment, and had caught his enemy in a trap, with one-third of his force across the water, and the remainder jammed in the defile of bridge and street. The 4th Dragoons charged Bron straight in front, the 3rd Dragoon Guards took him somewhat in flank, while Madden's Portuguese supported on the right, and Penne Villemur's Spaniards on the left. The two deployed French regiments were hurled back on the third, at the bridge-foot, and all three fell into most lamentable confusion. The Allies penetrated into the mass, and broke it to pieces, with great slaughter. The survivors, unable to pass the encumbered bridge, dispersed right and left, far along the banks of the stream, where they were pursued and hunted down in detail. Latour-Maubourg could do no more than dismount the leading regiment of his second brigade and set them to fire from the houses along the water-side, while four horse artillery guns opened upon the enemy's main body. But the guns were promptly silenced by Lefebure's battery, which Lumley had put in action on the slope above, and Latour-Maubourg had to watch the destruction of Bron's brigade without being able to give effective help. More than 250 dragoons were killed or wounded, and 6 officers, including the colonel of the 4th, with 72 men were led away prisoners [1]. The British loss was insignificant—not twenty troopers—for the enemy had been caught in a position in which they could offer no effective resistance. Lumley made no attempt to attack Usagre town, which would indeed have been insane, and drew off at leisure with his prisoners.

[1] Lumley in his very modest dispatch (Wellington, *Supplementary Dispatches*, xiii. pp. 654–6) under-estimates the damage he had done to the enemy. He states his 78 prisoners, and notes that 29 French dead had been counted, but only speaks of 50 wounded. There were really over 200. In combats with the *arme blanche*, the number of killed is always very small compared with that of the wounded, which here was about 8 to 1—not at all an unusual proportion in cavalry fights. A good account from the French side may be found in Picard's *Histoire de la Cavalerie, 1792–1815*, vol. ii. pp. 315–16.

Latour-Maubourg sent to recall Briche, and remained halted on his own side of the stream till evening.

At Usagre the two armies drew their line of demarcation for nearly a month. Soult stopped at Llerena, since he found that he was not to be pressed; his advanced cavalry continued to hold Usagre and Monasterio, on the two roads from Badajoz and Seville. Beresford, by Wellington's orders, did not move further forward: it was not intended that Andalusia should be invaded, or a second battle with Soult risked. The cavalry formed a line from Hinojosa to Fuente Cantos, facing the French, the Anglo-Portuguese forming the left, the Spanish the right of the screen. Some of Blake's infantry moved up to Zafra in support, but the main body remained further to the rear, about Santa Marta and Barcarrota. The British 2nd and 4th Divisions were placed further back, at Almendralejo and the neighbouring villages, with the bulk of Lumley's cavalry in front of them at Ribera, in support of the left half of the screen, which its advanced squadrons supplied. On the 27th May Beresford relinquished the command of the separate army of Estremadura, which had been merged in a larger unit when the 3rd and 7th Divisions came up to Campo Mayor on the 24th. Wellington had announced his intention of assuming permanent charge of the force in the south, which was henceforth considered as the main army, and the seat of head quarters, while Spencer's four divisions on the frontier of Leon were now to be regarded as the subsidiary force.

In his letters home Wellington spoke of Beresford's removal from active command in the field as necessary because of the unsatisfactory state into which the Portuguese army had fallen during his absence; his strong and methodical hand had been much missed, and matters of detail had all gone wrong. But there can be no doubt that this was a secondary consideration; the real cause of his supersession was that his chief had not been satisfied with his conduct of the Estremaduran campaign in March and April. Though there were excuses and explanations to be found for each one of his individual acts, yet the general effect of his leadership had not been happy. The best commentary on it was that every one, from Wellington to the simplest soldier in the ranks, was delighted to hear that

Rowland Hill had landed at Lisbon on May 24, and was on his way to the front to resume command of the 2nd Division. He was at once placed in the same position that he had held in 1810, i. e. entrusted with the command not only of his own division but of the whole wing of the army which was detached to the south. The force put at his disposition to observe Soult and cover the leaguer of Badajoz, consisted of precisely the same units that had formed Beresford's Albuera army—with the exception that Hamilton's and Collins's Portuguese had been drawn off to the siege operations. Hill had charge of the 2nd and 4th Divisions, Alten's detached German brigade, and De Grey's and Madden's cavalry, the whole about 10,000 strong. When he arrived at Elvas on May 31st, and then went forward to establish himself at Almendralejo, Wellington felt a degree of security that he had not known for months. It was certain that nothing would be risked, that there would be neither delays nor mistakes, while this kindly, cheerful, and resolute old soldier, the idol of his troops, who called him in affection 'Daddy Hill,' was in charge of the covering corps.

Meanwhile Wellington himself took the siege operations in hand, and employed in them the troops he had brought from the Beira, the 3rd and 7th Divisions, together with Hamilton's and Collins's Portuguese. The whole, including about 700 British and Portuguese artillerymen, mainly the same companies that had served in Beresford's siege, made up about 14,000 men —a force even smaller than that with which Soult had attacked Badajoz in January; but the French Marshal had had to deal with a garrison of 9,000 men, while General Phillipon, the resourceful governor now in charge of the place, had but a little over 3,000—a difference which made Wellington's position much more advantageous than Soult's had been. The cavalry which had come down from the Beira along with Picton, the 2nd Hussars of the K. G. L.[1], was sent to join the rest of the horse, and went to form a new brigade, being added to the 13th Light Dragoons, a regiment hitherto unbrigaded. By June 1st there

[1] Only two squadrons strong, because the remainder of the regiment was at Cadiz: it had (as will be remembered) done good service under Graham at Barrosa.

was another mounted corps to hand—the 11th Light Dragoons,[1] which also went to join Lumley, so that the British cavalry in Estremadura rose from three to six regiments during the summer.

There were two deficiencies, however, which made Wellington's task in besieging Badajoz a hard, nay an almost hopeless one. His artillery material, if not so ludicrously inadequate as that of Beresford during the first siege, was still utterly insufficient. And to this we must add that his engineer officers were still both few and unpractised in their art. They repeated the same mistakes that had been seen in the early days of May. Of trained rank and file in the engineering branch there were practically none—only twenty-five 'royal military artificers.' The home authorities apparently grudged sending out to Portugal men of this small and highly trained corps, and preferred to keep them in England. It is impossible to speak with patience of the fact that there was not even one company of them in the Peninsula, after the war had been going on for three years[2]!

It was the miscalculations of the engineers—Colonel Fletcher was presumably the responsible person, as Wellington's chief technical adviser—rather than the deplorable weakness of the artillery resources—which made the second British siege of Badajoz as disastrous as the first. Untaught by the experiences of the first week in May, the engineers advised Wellington to direct his efforts against the two strongest points in the defences, the rocky hill crowned by the fort of San Cristobal on one bank of the Guadiana, and the Castle on its steep slope upon the other. The arguments used seem to have been the same as before—time being limited, it was necessary to strike at the most decisive points. If either San Cristobal or the Castle could be breached and stormed, the rest of the fortress would be dominated and would become untenable. If, on the other hand, one of the southern fronts, where the French had made their attack, were

[1] It arrived by June 1st, according to Mr. Atkinson's useful list of Wellington's divisional organization.

[2] Mulcaster's company, the first to arrive, reached Spain some weeks later. By the time of the third siege of Badajoz in 1812 there were so many as 115 (!) military artificers available.

to be chosen as the objective, the Castle and San Cristobal, forming independent defences, might hold out long after the enceinte had been pierced and carried. Moreover, it was urged, San Cristobal was an isolated fort, so placed that it could get no help from the flank fires of other works, save from a few guns on the Castle; its other neighbour, the fort at the bridge-head, was too low-lying to be of any help.

Practically the only difference between the engineers' plans for the first[1] and the second siege of Badajoz was that in the latter more attention was paid to the attack on the south side, and the whole force of the besiegers was not concentrated on San Cristobal, as it had been in early May. A serious attempt was made to breach the Castle, not a mere demonstration or false attack. Yet, as matters turned out, all the stress of the work once more fell upon the San Cristobal front, where two desperate assaults were made and repulsed, while on the Castle front matters never got to the point of an attempted storm. Summing up the siege in the words of D'Urban, Beresford's chief of the staff, who watched it ruefully, we can only echo his conclusion 'that the fact is that the engineers began upon the wrong side[2].' Two geological peculiarities of the ground were fatal to success: the first was that on San Cristobal the soil is so shallow—three inches only on top of the hard rock—that it was impossible to construct proper trenches. The second was that the Castle hill is composed of a clay-slate which does not crumble, however much battered, and that the wall there was simply a facing to the native soil. Its stones might be battered down, but the hill-side stood firm when the stones had fallen, and remained perpendicular and inaccessible. The latter fact could not be known to Wellington's engineers; but the former was fully within their cognizance, owing to their experience in the first siege. There can be no doubt that they ought to have selected for battering the south front—either the point where Soult worked during February, or still better the walls nearer the river, by the bastion of San Vincente, where the ground is equally favourable and there is no flanking external defence like the Pardaleras

[1] Refer back to pp. 283–4 for details.

[2] D'Urban's diary under June 10th, when the siege was just developing into an acknowledged failure.

fort. If every gun had been concentrated on this section, and every available man set to trench-work against it, there can be little doubt that Wellington would have got Badajoz within the scant four weeks that were at his disposal.

Though the blockade had been resumed on May 18th, the actual siege did not recommence for some days later, since the troops from the Beira, who were to conduct it, did not get up till a week had passed. On May 25th Houston's division arrived from Campo Mayor, and took position on the heights beyond San Cristobal; they were there joined by the 17th Portuguese from the garrison of Elvas, and two regiments of Algarve Militia (Tavira and Lagos) were assigned for transport and convoy duty between the trenches and Elvas. Picton and the 3rd Division came up two days later (May 27th), crossed the Guadiana by the ford above the city, and joined Hamilton's Portuguese on the southern bank. An earlier arrival of the Beira divisions would have been of no great use, since it was only on the 29th that Colonel Alexander Dickson, who had once more been entrusted with the artillery arrangements, had sent off his great convoy of guns from Elvas. This time that indefatigable officer had collected a siege-train twice as large as that which he had prepared for Beresford four weeks earlier—there were forty-six guns in all[1] instead of twenty-three. But unhappily the pieces were the same as those used in the first siege, or their equals in age and defects. The large majority were the old brass 24-pounders of the seventeenth century which had already given so much trouble from their irregularity of calibre, their tendency to droop at the muzzle when much used, and their tiresome habit of 'unbushing' (i.e. blowing out their vent fitting). Six iron ship-guns, ordered up from Lisbon, only arrived when the siege was far advanced, and were the sole weapons of real efficiency with which Dickson was provided. It is clear that head quarters might have done something in the way of ordering up better guns early in May, the moment that

[1] 30 brass 24-pounders, 4 16-pounders, 4 ten-inch howitzers, 8 eight-inch ditto, according to Dickson's letter of May 29. See his papers, ed. Leslie, p. 394. I follow him rather than Jones's *Sieges of the Peninsula*, where they differ, as he is absolutely contemporary authority, and was the officer in charge of everything.

the first siege had shown the deficiencies of the Elvas museum of artillery antiquities. The gunners, like the guns, were about doubled in number since Beresford's *fiasco*: there were now over 500 Portuguese, and one company of British (Raynsford's), 110 strong, who arrived from Lisbon on the 30th, riding on mules which had been provided at Estremos to give them a rapid journey. To aid the twenty-one engineers on the spot, eleven officers from line battalions had been taken on as assistant engineers, while the twenty-five military artificers had to train 250 rank and file, selected from the 3rd and 7th Divisions, to act as carpenters, miners, and sappers. The work of these amateurs was, as might have been expected, not very satisfactory, and the make of their gabions and fascines left much to be desired.

On May 29th the siege work began, by the opening up of the old trenches opposite the Pardaleras fort, which the French had filled in on the day of Albuera. This was merely done to draw the attention of the garrison away from the real points of attack, for there was no intention of approaching the place from the south. It would have been better for the Allies had this been a genuine operation, and if the Castle and San Cristobal attacks had been false! It attracted, as was intended, much notice from the garrison.

On the night of the 30th the serious work began. On the Castle side 1,600 men from the 3rd Division commenced at dusk a long trench, on the same ground that had been dug over during the first siege, and three zigzag approaches to it from the rear. This trench, the first parallel, was no less than 800 yards from the Castle. The attention of the enemy was so much drawn to other points, and the soil was so soft, that by daybreak there had been formed a trench 1,100 yards long, with a parapet three feet high, and a depth of three feet in the ground: the approaches were also well advanced. On San Cristobal, at the other attack, everything went very differently. The ground chosen for the first parallel was, owing to the exigencies of the contour of the hill, only 400 yards from the fort. The working parties were discovered at once, and a heavy fire was directed on them, not only from San Cristobal, but from the Castle, across the river. It was found that there was no soil to dig in—what little once existed had been used in building the old trenches of the first

siege, and the French governor, during his days of respite, May 15–18, had ingeniously ordered that all this earth should be carted away, and thrown down the steep towards the river. All that could be done was to place a row of gabions along the intended line of trench, and to begin to bring up earth from below to stuff them. At daylight there was not more than two feet of earth thrown up along the more important points in the parallel, where it was intended that three batteries should be placed. The enemy's fire soon knocked over the gabions, and the working parties had to be withdrawn from a great part of the front. Practically nothing had been accomplished, and there had been many casualties.

Things continued to go on in the same fashion during the succeeding days. The parallel opposite the Castle was easily completed with little loss; a great battery for twenty guns was thrown up in the middle of it, and received its pieces, sixteen brass 24-pounders and four howitzers, on the night of the 2nd–3rd. No attempt was made to begin a second parallel nearer the Castle, from which it could be battered at short range. On the other hand the San Cristobal attack encountered heart-rending difficulties from the want of soil; the screen of gabions was knocked about, the two batteries opposite the fort made little progress, and the only thing completed was a third battery, at the extreme edge of the hill, which was far enough away to escape destruction, but also too far away (1,200 yards) to do much damage. It seemed so hopeless to work on the bare rock that Wellington ordered £400 worth of wool-packs to be bought in Elvas, and when these were brought up on June 2 they proved impermeable to shot, and a solid start could be made for the parapets of the batteries. But the enemy kept dropping shells, from mortars in the Castle, among the working parties, with great accuracy, and the casualties were many. On June 2nd two small batteries, for five and eight guns respectively, had at last been erected about 450 yards from the fort, and a third behind them, in support, for four more guns, which were to shoot over the parallel.

At half-past nine in the morning of June 3rd the batteries on both fronts began to play on their chosen objectives. The fire was at first wild, owing to the eccentric behaviour of the old

seventeenth-century brass guns, every one of which had its tricks and deficiencies. As the gunners began to learn and humour them, some effect began to be produced, especially on the Castle. Here great flakes of masonry began to fall in the evening, but it was noticed that behind the stone facing there was a core of clay-slate, the natural soil of the Castle hill, which remained perpendicular when the masonry crumbled. On San Cristobal, the south-east front of the fort, the one selected for breaching, was somewhat damaged, and the guns nearly silenced by evening. But the besiegers' artillery had already begun to fall off in strength: only one piece had been disabled by the French, but four others had gone out of action owing to their own faults, 'unbushing,' 'muzzle drooping,' or carriages shaken to pieces by recoil. The second day of fire (June 4th) was hardly more satisfactory in its results: against the Castle the guns made better practice so far as accurate hitting the mark went, but the balls seemed to have no effect: the core of soil behind the breached masonry remained nearly as perpendicular as on the preceding evening. 'Eight-inch shells fired against it would not penetrate it,' wrote the disgusted Alexander Dickson, 'but absolutely dropped back, and burst below among the rubbish[1].' Meanwhile one more gun in this attack was disabled by the French fire, two by 'muzzle drooping,' and three howitzer carriages were so shaken that they had to be withdrawn for repairs. Only thirteen guns out of the original twenty were firing at sunset, and 'the failure of the old brass pieces was becoming so alarming that an interval of seven to eight minutes was ordered between each round, to give the metal time to cool[2].' A new battery was constructed at the right end of the parallel, near the river, at a point somewhat nearer to the Castle than the original battery, in the hope that fire from a distance shorter by a hundred yards might have better effect, and five guns were moved into it under cover of the night.

On San Cristobal the second day's fire was a little better in results, the flank of the fort which was selected for breaching having its parapet knocked to pieces, and much débris having fallen into the ditch. But unknown to the besiegers, whose view

[1] *Dickson Papers*, ed. Leslie, p. 405.

[2] Jones, *Sieges of the Peninsula*, i. p. 54.

could not command the bottom of the ditch, the French removed most of the stones and rubbish during the night, so that the accumulation at the bottom, on which the practicability of the future breach depended, was much smaller than was supposed by the British engineers. Two more guns and two howitzers in this attack were out of action by the evening—all owing to their own defects, not to the fire from the fort. The batteries were much incommoded by an enfilading fire across the river from the Castle, where some guns had been placed on a high 'cavalier' to bear on the slopes below Cristobal.

On June 5 affairs went on much in the same style: the breaching of the Castle was an absolute failure: 'the practice was extremely good, but the bank of earth at the breach still remained perpendicular[1].' It was discovered, however, that the French were so far alarmed at the results of the battering that they were constructing elaborate inner retrenchments behind the breach. On Cristobal the prospects looked more promising; so much of the wall as was visible over the edge of the ditch along the attacked front was demolished for a distance of many yards. With another day's fire it was decided that the breach would be practicable[2].

Accordingly the batteries on both sides of the river thundered away for the whole day on the 6th, the Castle attack with fourteen guns out of its original twenty, the Cristobal attack with seventeen remaining out of twenty-three. On the former front the results were somewhat more satisfactory than those of the three first days of battering: the seam in the castle wall appearing much wider, and the accumulation of rubbish at its foot beginning to look appreciable. Observers in the trenches held that a single man, climbing unhindered, might get up to the top, but of course there was a great difference between such a scrambling place and a 'practicable breach.' Nothing, at any rate, could yet be done on this side in the way of assault. There were, it must be remembered, 800 yards of open ground between the parallel from which a storming-column must start and the

[1] Jones; *Sieges of the Peninsula*, i. p. 57.

[2] This decision was the result of the report of an engineer officer, Lieutenant Forster, who crept up to the edge of the ditch during the night of the 5th–6th, and saw much rubble therein.

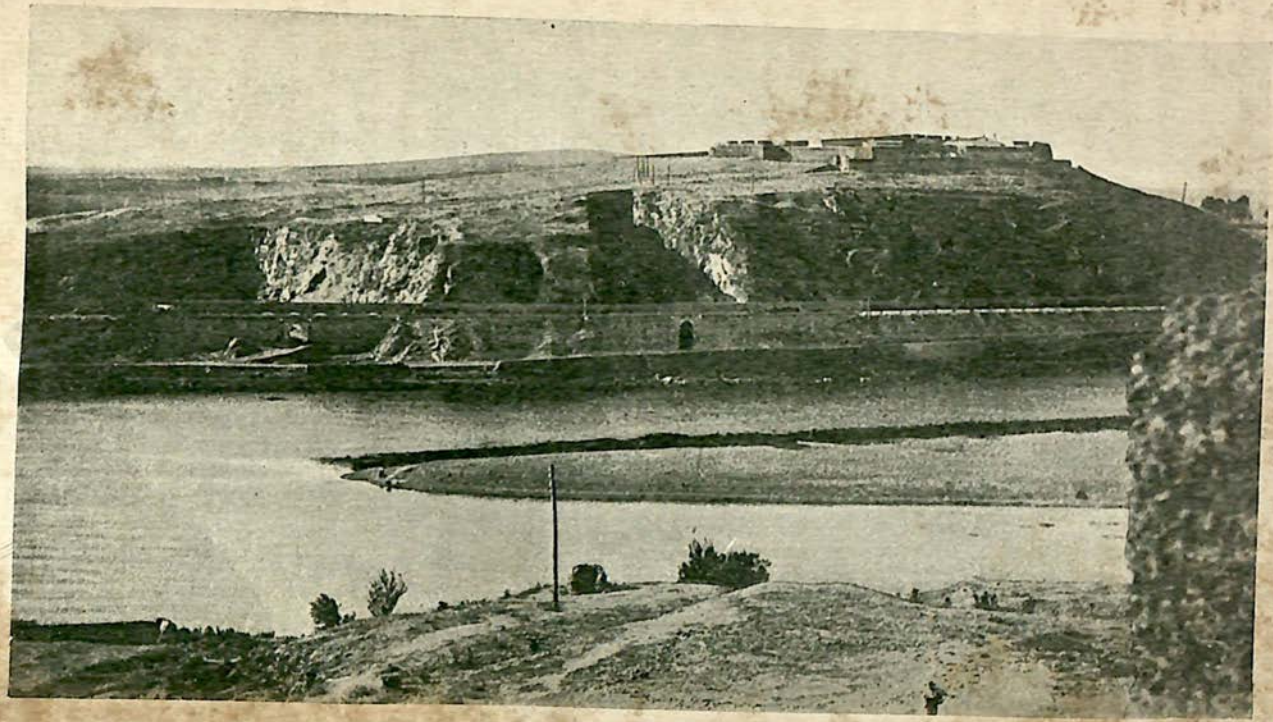
foot of the damaged wall, not to speak of the muddy bed of the Rivillas brook, which had to be forded in order to reach the Castle hill.

The San Cristobal breach, on the other hand, was judged ripe for assault, though the condition of its lower part was not accurately known. According to French accounts it was probably practicable at dusk, but the moment that night fell sixty men went down into the ditch, and began clearing away the débris with such energy that there was a sheer seven-foot drop once more, at midnight, between the bottom of the excavation and the lip of the battered wall above it. The garrison also stuffed up the breach with *chevaux de frise*, and carts turned upside down and jammed together, while the sappers in the fort prepared a quantity of fourteen-inch bombs, to be thrown by hand into the ditch when an assault should be made. It is probable that the delay of over four hours between dark (7.30) and midnight, when the storm came, just sufficed to provide defences strong enough to render the attack hopeless. The governor of the fort, Captain Chauvin of the 88th Line, deserves all credit for his admirable activity and resource.

The arrangement of the assault fell to General Houston, whose division was to deliver it. The regiments from which volunteers were picked were the 1/51st, 2/85th, and 17th Portuguese. The forlorn hope of twenty-five men was conducted by the engineer, Lieutenant Forster, who had explored the ditch on the preceding night, and led by Lieutenant Dyas of the 51st. The main body of the assaulting column was composed of 155 grenadiers, led by Major Mackintosh of the 85th; they were divided into two companies; the leading company carried ten ladders, for use in case it should be found that the ditch was cleared and the ascent to the breach steep. Detachments from the guards of the trenches were to move out, and cut the communication between San Cristobal and the works near the bridgehead, from which reinforcements might come[1].

At midnight the stormers broke out of the trenches, and ran, as fast as was possible in the obscurity, up the 400 yards of bare hillside which separated them from the fort. They suffered no

[1] Details of the orders for the assault may be found on pp. 62-3 of Jones's *Sieges*, vol. i.



FORT SAN CRISTOBAL FROM THE SOUTH BANK OF THE GUADIANA

great loss in the early moments of their rush, for though the garrison detected them at once, and plied them both with grape and with musketry, the darkness was a good protection. The forlorn hope crossed the counterscarp with no difficulty—it was only four feet deep in front of the breach—and leaped down into the ditch. There they came to a stand at once, for there were seven feet of sheer ascent from the hole in which they stood to the lowest point of the lip of the breach, and they saw that the gap itself had been stopped with the carts, *chevaux de frise* and other obstacles. Their officers called them off, and they were retiring with little loss, when the main body of the storming party came leaping down into the ditch. Getting news that the breach was impracticable, the officers in command of the two grenadier companies made a gallant but ill-judged series of attempts to escalade the unbreached parts of the scarp with the ten ladders that their men carried. The ascent being twenty feet high everywhere, and the ladders only fifteen feet long, it was bound to fail. But, refusing to be discomfited by a first failure, the stormers carried the ladders round to several other points of the ditch, looking in vain for a place where the walls might prove lower. The French garrison plied them incessantly with musketry, and kept rolling down among them the live shells that had been prepared for the occasion. At last the losses had grown so great that the wearied assailants, after spending nearly an hour in the ditch, had to withdraw. Out of 180 men employed there were no less than 12 dead and about 80 wounded [1], a sufficient testimony to the obstinacy of the assault. How hopeless it was may be judged from the fact that the French had only 1 man killed and 5 wounded. Everything seems to have been miscalculated in this unhappy affair—especially the number of the stormers—180 men of all ranks were wholly inadequate for the assault.

[1] 51st Regiment: 3 killed, an officer and 35 men wounded, 3 missing = 42.
85th Regiment: 2 officers and 6 men wounded = 8.
17th Portuguese: 9 killed, 2 officers and 26 men wounded = 37.
Chasseurs Britanniques and Brunswick Oels: 7 wounded.
Engineers: 1 officer mortally wounded. Jones says (i. 65) 12 killed and 90 wounded, but d'Urban gives the number stated above, and the figures of the returns bear him out.

The failure against San Cristobal convinced Wellington's engineers that it was useless to try force till the works had been more severely battered, and three further days of artillery work were put in, before a second storm was tried. The old guns from Elvas continued to disable themselves, and on the 9th only thirteen were in proper order on the Cristobal attack. Things would have been still worse opposite the Castle if six good iron ship-guns from Lisbon had not come up on the 7th. These were put into a new battery on the extreme right, and worked very well. But, including them, there were only twenty pieces playing on the Castle breach on the 8th and 9th. Of the original forty-six guns and howitzers only twenty-seven survived!

The net result of these last three days of bombardment on the Castle side was still unsatisfactory. The ship-guns had at last brought down a good deal of earth and rubble, which was lying in a heap at the foot of the battered wall. But on each of the mornings of the 8th and 9th it was found that the French had, during the dark hours, scarped the front of the breach, and thrown aside so much of the débris that there was still a perpendicular face of six or seven feet high, between the top of the heap of broken earth and masonry and the bottom of the seam of broken wall. This work had been carried out by the garrison under great difficulties, for the British batteries had been throwing grape against the foot of the breach all night, for the purpose of preventing any such activity. But the French, trusting to the cover of the darkness, had continued to work on manfully, and, though some men were hit, the task had on each night been more or less carried out. On the 9th the engineers came to the conclusion that they dared not advise any attempt to storm on this side, considering the enormous distance—600 yards from the wall—at which the columns of attack would have to start, even if they debouched from the part of the parallel which was nearest to the Castle. There was also the bed of the Rivillas to cross, and the guns from that part of the Castle which was uninjured, and from the flank of San Cristobal, would cut up the stormers by enfilading fire. The engineers reluctantly concluded that nothing could be done against the Castle till San Cristobal had fallen, or till a second parallel had been pushed forward much nearer to the place. This was a confession that all their original plans

had been erroneous, and that the immense store of shot and shell lavished on the Castle breach had been wasted.

All therefore depended on the result of a second attempt to storm San Cristobal. Here there were now two breaches, a large and a small one; the parapets were completely knocked to pieces, and the fort looked a mere battered heap; its fire had been nearly silenced—so much so that not a single casualty occurred in the trench before it during the last twelve hours of bombardment. Nevertheless the breaches were not very practicable, for here (as at the Castle) the garrison had, by hard work during the nights, cleared away great part of the débris below the breach; they could not be prevented from doing so, because the besiegers' batteries were so far away that they were unable to command the dead ground in the bottom of the ditch. On each morning the battered parapet was found to have been replaced with sandbags and wool-packs, and the breach itself stopped with *chevaux de frise*. These were swept away again by continual battering, both on the 8th and the 9th, but the gallant garrison began to replace them on each evening the moment that dusk fell. Nor could this be prevented, because, contrary to all the rules of siegecraft, the besiegers had not sapped up close enough to the walls to enable them to prevent repairs from being carried out. General Phillipon had doubled the garrison of the fort, which now consisted of two companies instead of the one that had held it on the 6th. The men were furnished with three muskets each, and a great store of grenades, fire-balls, and live shell, prepared for throwing by hand, had been sent up into the work.

The 7th Division delivered its second assault on the night of the 9th, three hours earlier than on the previous occasion, and only ninety minutes after dark had fallen. This moment had been chosen in order that the French might have less time to do repairs. But nine o'clock was still too late an hour; rough preparations to receive the stormers had already been made when they arrived. The French narratives state that an assault by daylight in the late afternoon would have been much more likely to succeed[1]. But this idea, though it had been mooted in the English camp, was rejected because of the distance which the

[1] Lamare, p. 193.

attacking column would have to advance, fully visible in the open, under fire, and uphill. Once more the fact that the parallel was too far from the fort had become all important as a hindrance; on the San Cristobal heights approaches could not be driven any nearer, for want of earth to dig in. This had been known from the first, and should have been held sufficient reason for not attacking at all upon this stony height.

General Houston told off for the assault a force twice as great as that which had been sent forward on the 6th, 400 men instead of 180, and (a precaution neglected on the previous occasion) 100 picked shots were told off to line the outer edge of the ditch and keep up a fire against the enemy lining the breach. The assaulting column was guided by Lieutenant Hunt, R.E., and commanded by Major McGeechy of the 17th Portuguese [1]. The volunteers forming it were taken from all the regiments of Sontag's brigade, the 51st, 85th, *Chasseurs Britanniques*, and Brunswick Oels, and also from the 17th Portuguese. There being now two breaches, the column was to divide into two halves, one making for that in the salient angle, the other for that in the curtain. The former carried six ladders, the latter ten [2].

The men were paraded in the ravine behind the parallel, and came out into the open at 9 o'clock. They were seen at once, and came under a rapid fire of musketry as they breasted the slope. The guiding engineer, Hunt, and the commander of the column, McGeechy, were both killed before the ditch was reached, with many others. But the forlorn hope sprang down and made for the breaches, followed a moment later by the supports. It appears that, as on June 6th, there was found to be a gap between the top of the rubble in the ditch and the lips of both breaches, six or seven feet high. The ladders were therefore brought forward, and many of them were reared; but the musketry fire knocked over nearly every man who tried to ascend them, and the few who got a footing in the breach were met and bayoneted by the garrison, who showed splendid courage, running down the slope of the breach and charging any small knot

[1] The forlorn hope was *again* led by Dyas of the 51st.

[2] For details see Houston's orders on pp. 77–9 of Jones's vol. i.

of men who struggled on from the ladders[1]. Meanwhile the mass in the ditch, who could not press forward to the breach-foot, were pelted with stones, hand-grenades, bags of powder, and fire-balls. Finally, after nearly an hour of unavailing effort, all the ladders were broken or thrown down, the assailants had lost 5 officers and 49 men killed, and 8 officers and 77 men wounded, and the column recoiled to the trenches[2]. The breaches and glacis were so strewn with their wounded that the artillery dared not fire to cover the retreat, and the French, descending into the ditch, took up to the fort two wounded officers as prisoners, removed the ladders, and threw aside much of the débris, so that the breach-foot was completely cleared.

The losses suffered, one man in three, and the time for which the stormers persisted in the attempt, some fifty minutes, prove that there was no want of courage shown on this disastrous night. The fact seems to be that, as on the 6th, the breach was not really practicable, that an attack could hardly succeed when the column had to cross 400 yards of exposed ground before reaching the fort, and that a storm should never have been tried, when the besieger had not sapped up to the edge of the ditch and placed himself in a position to command it. It may be mentioned that such a ditch as this, hewn in the live rock and very deep, was particularly hard to deal with. Its edges could

[1] French observers in the fort noted one attempt made by men of their own nationality, from the *Chasseurs Britanniques*. A young officer, calling 'Je monte, suivez-moi,' got to the top of the ladder with two or three of his soldiers, ran some feet forward up the lip of the breach, and was then bayoneted. This must have been Lieutenant Dufief of the *C.B.*, the only officer of the corps returned as hurt in the storm. See Lapéne's *Campagne de 1810–11 dans le Midi de l'Espagne*, p. 210.

[2] The losses were, according to the report:—

	Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		
	Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total.*
51st	1	23	2	31	—	—	= 57
85th	1	7	1	10	1	—	= 20
Chasseurs Britanniques	—	8	1	13	—	2	= 24
Brunswick Oels	—	1	1	5	—	—	= 7
17th Portuguese	2	10	1	16	1	—	= 30
Engineers	1	—	—	—	—	—	= 1

Total, 54 killed, 81 wounded, and 4 missing = 139

not become abraded, and it was easy for the defenders to shovel away the débris that fell into it, because the bottom was solid and hard, and the masonry that had been knocked down lay on it, instead of sinking into its floor.

On the morning of the 10th the fire against the Castle was continued with vigour, but on San Cristobal there was a six hours' truce, which was asked and granted, in order that the many wounded scattered along the slope below the fort might be gathered in. The French, being able to work unmolested at repairs during the cessation of fire, had every reason for giving a polite and humane answer to the request made by the besiegers.

Everything seemed now to depend on the attack against the Castle, since that on the other side of the river had come to such a disastrous conclusion. The fire of the newly arrived iron ship-guns was still very effective, and the breach looked larger and less steep. In fact French accounts state that it was now for the first time thoroughly practicable—but it was 800 yards from the British parallel, and the artillery on the neighbouring bastions and even on the Castle itself was still intact. Phillipon was in no wise freed from care by the successful repulse of the two attempts to storm San Cristobal. He had just had to reduce his troops to half-rations, and even on this scale there were only ten days more of food in the place: no provisions had been got in since Beresford's first siege began in April. The garrison, though its losses in killed and wounded had not been great, had many sick, and the strain of being constantly under arms expecting an assault was beginning to be felt. There was no news from outside, save that brought by two or three deserters from the foreign corps in the British 7th Division, who reported that Soult was still in the Sierra Morena[1], and that they had heard nothing of the approach of a relieving army, though there was a rumour that Victor was going to raise the siege of Cadiz in order to join his chief. Phillipon was forced to contemplate the double possibility of his provisions running short and of a successful assault on the Castle front. Wherefore he resolved that preparations should be made to bring off the garrison by a sally, if the worst came to the worst. If no

[1] Lamare, p. 179.

relief came, or if the walls were forced, the whole available body of his men were to cross the river to the Cristobal side under cover of the night, and to dash at the lines of the besiegers, in order to cut their way through by the road to Montijo and Merida. But this was not to be tried before the day of absolute necessity should arrive: the council of war called by the governor decided that the topic of evasion need not be broached for five days more [1]. Before those five days had expired they were out of danger and sure of relief.

It was at noon on June 10th that Wellington made up his mind that the siege must be abandoned. Calling together the divisional commanders, and the senior officers of artillery and engineers, he gave them a short address. It had been proved, he said, that it was impossible to storm San Cristobal without sapping up to the crest of the glacis, which was a practically impossible task on the bare rock. There was now a breach in the Castle, but it was too remote from the parallel, and the route to it was commanded both by the guns on the flank of San Cristobal and those on the lunette of San Roque and other parts of the southern enceinte. It was known that it had been elaborately retrenched behind, by ditches and palisades. But these were not his sole or the main reasons for stopping the siege. He had news that Marmont and the 9th Corps would both join Soult in a few days: and the allied army must not be caught in the trenches, and forced to fight superior numbers in an unfavourable position. It would be possible to stop five days more and to continue the battering for that time, but on the 15th the French armies might be concentrated and a general action forced upon him. This he would not risk, but had decided to order the whole siege-train to be withdrawn into Elvas at once, while the army would keep up the blockade of Badajoz till the enemy drew near, and would then retire beyond the Guadiana at its leisure, and take up a position on the Portuguese frontier which he had already chosen. As soon as it was dark the guns should be withdrawn from the batteries, and the sending of stores, tools, &c., back to Elvas must commence. He would have risked a couple of days more battering if he had thought it likely to lead to a storm. But it was his opinion that there

[1] Lapéne, p. 212. Cf. Lamare, p. 203.

was no prospect of immediate success against the place, and he was therefore resolved to give up the siege even before he was actually forced to do so. Rumour adds that he muttered more or less to himself that 'next time he would be his own engineer[1].' But he did not speak publicly in censure of the mistakes of Fletcher and his colleagues: the men who had planned and built the Lines of Torres Vedras were not to be disgraced lightly, even if they had failed in their last task.

The approaching concentration of the French armies had been very carefully watched by Wellington, who was in constant touch with Spencer, and had been keeping a most vigilant eye on all his reports. He had also been helped by several intercepted dispatches, taken on the way between the Armies of Portugal and Andalusia, and by reports from the guerrillero chiefs of Castile and his own secret correspondents in Salamanca. Marmont had been much more rapid in his movements, and had shown more willingness to help a colleague in distress, than was usual among the French commanders in Spain. He was new to command, and very zealous; it is certain that a year later, when he had gained more experience of co-operation with Soult, he would not come so fast and so eagerly to his aid.

The Duke of Ragusa had conducted the Army of Portugal back to Salamanca on May 15th, and had (as has been already related[2]) spent the next fortnight in breaking up the old corps into six new divisions of infantry and five brigades of cavalry. The regiments had all sent back to France the cadres of their 3rd battalions and their 3rd and 4th squadrons. The infantry battalions had been completed up to about 700 men each: and the six divisions had by May 25th about 28,000 men present with the colours[3], besides sick and detachments, who were very

[1] See Burgoyne's *Diary*, i. p. 135: 'There is an account current that his Lordship says if he undertakes another siege he will be his own engineer. Whatever faults were committed at Badajoz I suspect he was not aware of them, and I think it very doubtful whether he even knows them now. It appears to me probable that he *did* say so, by the mystery affected about *our* [the engineer] head-quarters respecting the siege.' Burgoyne, an engineer with his feelings hurt, under-values Wellington's intelligence.

[2] See pp. 361–2.

[3] These figures, given by Marmont in his *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 40–1, are borne out by the official states.

numerous[1]. There were only 2,500 cavalry fit for service, and six batteries of artillery; great drafts of horses were promised from France, by which it was hoped that the former would ere long be able to show 5,000 sabres, and the latter to put 60 guns in the field. Meanwhile there were not more than 33,000 men of all arms fit to march.

Soult, before starting on his Albuera campaign, had written to Masséna (whose deposition was unknown to him) to state that if he failed in his attempt to deliver Badajoz at the head of his own expeditionary force, he might have to ask for aid from the Army of Portugal. This letter was delivered to Marmont on May 14th, when he had just assumed command. He replied (May 16) that he recognized the importance of Badajoz, and would move all or a part of his army southward if it were really required. Soult received the dispatch from the hands of his colleague's aide-de-camp Fabvier at Llerena on May 27th, and was overjoyed at its contents. He wrote to acknowledge the offer in terms of effusive politeness, and begged Marmont to march not with a detachment but with his whole army.[2] Though he was expecting to be joined by Drouet and the 9th Corps within ten days, he was doubtful whether that reinforcement would make him strong enough to face Wellington. But, with 30,000 men of the Army of Portugal placed in the valley of the Guadiana, there would be a force amply sufficient to sweep the Allies back into Portugal. On hearing that Marmont had started, he would extend his troops toward Merida, where the head of his colleague's column, coming by Truxillo and Almaraz, would probably appear.

Long before Soult's Llerena dispatch came to hand, Marmont had already begun to move some of his divisions towards the

[1] Bessières writes to Berthier on May 23 that he has 4,000 men of the Army of Portugal, convalescents and drafts, in his government, who could be sent forward if there were officers to take charge of them. In reality the figures were even greater. There were also some 4,000 sick in the hospitals of the army at Salamanca, &c.

[2] Soult to Marmont, May 27th, printed in Marmont's *Mémoires*, iv. 93-5. It contains much rhodomontade on the 'successful' action of Albuera, to which Marmont appends a caustic note, 'Excellente plaisanterie que de représenter comme une victoire une bataille offensive dont le but n'a pas été atteint!'

Tagus, as a precautionary measure, in case his offer should be accepted. But it was apparently the news of Albuera which made him resolve to betake himself to Estremadura with every available man, and not Soult's appeal, which only reached him after he had started. He was anxious to hand over the charge of the whole frontier of Leon, and of the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, to Bessières. But the Duke of Istria protested in the most vehement style against having this responsibility thrust upon him. Until he had learnt of the Albuera check, he kept preaching to Mortier on the text that Soult was well able to take care of himself, and ought to draw rather on Drouet and Madrid for reinforcements than on the Army of Portugal. Marmont might move a division to Baños and Bejar, and two more to Plasencia, but this was all that honour and prudence demanded. The main body of his troops ought to be left in or near Salamanca, to observe the British force in front of Ciudad Rodrigo. The Army of the North could not spare a man to relieve Marmont's troops on the Douro and the Tormes, if they marched away; what with the Galicians, the Cantabrian bands of Longa and Porlier, and the guerrilleros, it had so much upon its hands that it could not find one brigade to occupy Salamanca. The Army of Portugal was so much in need of rest and reinforcement that it would perish by the way, or never reach Badajoz, if its commander persisted in carrying out his quixotic plan, &c.

All these arguments were hollow: Bessières disliked Soult, and not only would not stir a finger himself to aid him, but wished to discourage Marmont from doing so. When the news of Albuera came, he made shift to protect the frontiers of Leon, despite of all his previous allegations. His estimate of the impossibility of the march to Badajoz was absolutely falsified: the Army of Portugal accomplished it in fifteen days without any appreciable loss in men or material. Marmont deserves, as he himself remarks[1], great credit for his move, which was made contrary to his colleague's advice, and without any orders from Paris. For Napoleon's dispatches, based, as usual, on facts three weeks or a month old, were coming in at this time with notes as to the resting and reorganization of the army, and spoke of

[1] *Mémoires*, iv. . 100.

a battle near Ciudad Rodrigo, to keep Wellington from besieging that place, as the next task which would probably fall to the Duke of Ragusa[1]. Marmont had as directions nothing but a vague precept to 'act for the general interest of the Imperial armies in Spain' and to keep an eye on Andalusia, where the progress of affairs would be better known to him than it could be in Paris[2]. These directions he most certainly carried out, but on his own responsibility, and without any detailed instructions from his master. Indeed, his dispatch of May 31st, in which he informed the Emperor that he was about to march for the Tagus, brought down on him a scolding from Berthier for moving with only thirty-six pieces of artillery, and for not having sent back to Bayonne a mass of men of the train, who were to pick up horses there[3]. If Marmont had waited to procure more teams from the rear, he would never have joined Soult in time to raise the siege of Badajoz. It was the quickness of his movement which forced the Allies to abandon that enterprise.

Wellington had been from the first convinced that Marmont would move southward on hearing of Soult's check at Albuera. It was for this reason that he made no scruple of depleting Spencer's corps of reinforcements for the army in Estremadura: not only detachments, but probably the whole force would ere long have to be drawn to join the main army. On May 24th, as has been already mentioned, he ordered Howard's British[4] and Ashworth's Portuguese brigades to move towards him via Sabugal, Castello Branco, and the bridge of Villa Velha. Howard's 1,500 men were to be taken away permanently from the 1st Division and added to the second, replacing in it three battalions which, owing to the carnage of Albuera, had to be sent home to recruit[5]. By June 8th Howard had reached Talavera Real, near Badajoz, and had formally been placed on the roll of the 2nd Division, which then rose once more to 4,000 men.

In compliance with his chief's general directions that, if the

[1] See especially Berthier to Marmont of May 27.

[2] Berthier to Marmont, 10th May, 1811.

[3] Berthier to Marmont, June 17th.

[4] Howard's brigade consisted of the 1/50th, 1/71st, 1/92nd, and a rifle company of the 5/60th.

[5] The battalions which went home were the 2/28th, 29th, 2/48th, 2/39th,

French Army of Portugal turned southward, he himself was to make a corresponding movement, Spencer moved the Light and 1st Divisions from their cantonments towards Sabugal, on a rumour (which turned out to be premature) that Marmont had already started on the 26th of May. Learning that he had been misinformed, he brought them back again to their old cantonments between the Azava and the Coa on the 27th[1]. On the next day there arrived detailed and certain news from secret correspondents in Salamanca, to the effect that Marmont was concentrating his troops in two bodies, one, under his own command, at Salamanca itself, the other about Alba de Tormes and Tamames. The natural deduction from this information was that one column would march by the Puerto de Baños over the mountains to the Tagus, and the other by Ciudad Rodrigo and the Puerto de Perales. Wellington, on receiving the Spanish notes forwarded by Spencer, was delighted to find that his forecast was almost certainly right. 'You will see by my letter yesterday,' he wrote on June 2nd, 'that I did not make a bad guess at the enemy's probable movement, as described in the letters from our friends of the 28th, enclosed in yours of the 31st[2].' His own dispatch of June 1st, to which he refers, had already told Spencer that the moment Marmont moved he was to bring up his right to Penamacor, and his left to Sabugal, leaving only a screen in front of Ciudad Rodrigo. But since it was not quite certain that the Marshal might not be projecting a mere raid into the Beira, either by the Almeida or the Sabugal road, no definite move was to be made till it was clear that the French columns were heading for the passes. This caution against over-hasty deductions kept Spencer very much in his original position till June 4th, the day on which Marmont's movements became clear.

The Marshal had concentrated one division (Foy's[3]) and all his cavalry at Salamanca on June 1st, while Reynier with two divisions, followed at a day's distance by three more, moved from

[1] Light Division diaries (Simmons) show these to be the correct days.

[2] Wellington to Spencer, 2nd of June, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 633.

[3] Marmont says only one division, and I follow him here, as the best authority, though Foy in his *Mémoires* says two divisions.

Tamames for the eastern pass, the Puerto de Baños. On the 3rd the Marshal and the smaller column started from Salamanca on the Rodrigo road, for the purpose of making a demonstration against Almeida, which was intended to hold Spencer in his present position, while Reynier and the main body of the French army should get two or three days' start. Marmont reached Rodrigo on the 5th, and sallied out from it, cavalry in front, on the following morning. He was exposing himself to some danger, since Spencer had four divisions within call, though his cavalry was weak—only two British and two Portuguese regiments [1]. But, uncertain as to the strength of his enemy, Spencer gave way; the Light Division and Slade's cavalry being drawn back from the line of the Azava, while the other three divisions marched for Sabugal under the cover of this screen. The road to Almeida being thus left unguarded, Pack, who was lying there with his Portuguese brigade, blew up such part of the enciente as remained intact after Brennier's explosion, and retired westward. For this both he and Spencer were blamed by Wellington, who said that they should have waited till the French actually made a move towards Almeida before destroying it. Its subsequent repair was made much more difficult by the supplementary damage needlessly carried out [2].

Marmont's force, 5,000 foot and 2,500 cavalry, advanced in pursuit of Spencer by both the Gallegos and the Carpio roads. It was only on the latter, however, that any serious skirmishing occurred. Montbrun's squadrons in overwhelming numbers pressed hard on the British cavalry screen, composed on this front of the 1st Dragoons and a squadron of the 14th Light Dragoons, under Slade. That brigadier, always, if his subordinates are to be trusted, a little over-slow in movement, allowed himself to be outflanked while executing a series of

[1] Slade's and Barbaçena's brigades. The other British cavalry brigade (Anson's) had marched for the south on June 1, and was at this moment at Caria, near Castello Branco.

[2] Wellington was still more angry with Spencer for authorizing Pack to blow up the place, for the brigadier had very properly asked definite leave to do so from his immediate superior. Wellington argued that a proper reading of his dispatches would have showed Spencer that the destruction was only to be made in case Marmont actually marched on Almeida. See *Dispatches*, viii. p. 1.

demonstrations to cover the rear of the infantry, and only got off without serious loss through the gallantry of a squadron of the Royals, who charged the turning force at an opportune moment, and gained time for the rest of the regiment to retire with some difficulty across the marsh of Nava de Aver[1]. A dangerous movement was got over with the loss of only four men killed and nine wounded.

Spencer's whole force had reached Alfayates by the night of the 6th, retiring before a French column of not a third of its own strength. On the next day he received from Colonel Waters, one of Wellington's great intelligence officers, news which cleared up the situation for him. Waters, who came in from a tour in the Sierra de Gata, reported that an immense French column was already passing the Puerto de Baños, thirty miles to the east, and that the force in front of the British did not apparently exceed the single division of infantry and the four brigades of horse which had been already seen and noted. There was no need therefore to retire towards the Zezere and the Estrada Nova, for Marmont was not making a serious raid into Portugal, but only covering the march of his main body by a demonstration. The truth of this intelligence was soon verified, for the Marshal, instead of pressing the British rear on the 7th, wheeled eastward, and went off by the Pass of Perales, leaving Spencer entirely unmolested.

Wellington's original orders thus became valid and practicable, and Spencer was able to march his whole four divisions towards Badajoz and the main army, with the certainty that he was moving parallel to Marmont's route, and that he could join his chief many days before the French columns could unite with Soult. For the invaluable bridge of Villa Velha now became of primary importance. It provided a good passage over the Tagus, leading straight to Estremadura by a short line, while the French, having no bridge lower down the river than Almaraz, were compelled to make a much longer detour, and to spend several days more than the British in transferring themselves to the southern seat of war.

The head of Spencer's marching column was now formed by

[1] See Napier, iii. p. 312; Ainslie's *History of the Royals*, pp. 120–1; Tomkinson, p. 105.

Anson's light cavalry, who had moved (as it will be remembered) towards Castello Branco before the rest of the army[1]. Then came the infantry divisions, while Slade remained to cover the rear, and only marched on when the main body had already crossed the Tagus[2]. The route lay from Alfayates by Penamacor, São Miguel d'Arche, Castello Branco, Villa Velha, Niza, and Portalegre. Anson crossed the Tagus at the bridge of Villa Velha on June 11th, the Light Division on June 12th, the 1st Division on the 14th–15th, Pack's Portuguese and the 6th Division on June 15th–16th. Slade's cavalry, who had waited behind near Castello Branco till it should be certain that no French were showing in this direction, only came over the river on the 19th. All this was rough marching, in hot weather, over bad roads, and the troops suffered somewhat from sunstroke and from occasional lack of water in the mountains. But the transport worked fairly well in spite of all difficulties, and food only once failed to be distributed regularly[3]. By dint of moving as far as was possible in the early morning and the evening hours, the divisions made good time, and the distances covered exceeded on several days twenty miles in the twenty-four hours[4].

On the 13th the head of the infantry column was at Niza, only

[1] See p. 437.

[2] Napier says that Spencer on his southern march 'detached a division and his cavalry to Coria as flankers' (iii. 312). I think this statement that the British flank-guard was pushed forward into Spain is an error, caused by the similarity of names between the Spanish Coria and Caria in Portugal, between Sabugal and Castello Branco. For it is certain that Anson's cavalry brigade were at Caria June 3rd–9th, and then went on to Castello Branco and Villa Velha, while Slade's cavalry were from the 7th to the 15th between Alfayates and Castello Branco. See the regimental histories.

[3] See Leach, p. 221.

[4] Napier's statement (iii. p. 312) that 'the Light Division did not leave a single straggler behind' is contradicted by the note of Leach of the 95th (p. 221) that 'on June 11 many hundreds of men were left by the wayside quite exhausted by the intense heat, which compelled us to make frequent halts by day and to proceed by night.' Tomkinson also notes that the Light Division lost men, who fell dead from sunstroke while marching up the steep ascent to Niza on June 13th (p. 106). He says that the Light Division men were so willing that they marched on till the last possible moment, and reeled over to die.

twenty miles from Portalegre, and fifty from Badajoz, while its rear had passed Castello Branco and was nearing the Tagus. Wellington was therefore able to contemplate the situation with serenity. Spencer's whole force would be able to join him long before Marmont could unite with Soult. He ordered that each of the divisions, as it reached Portalegre, should take several days' rest before moving on to Campo Mayor and Elvas.

The French army meanwhile had endured a much longer and more fatiguing march. The head of Reynier's column, moving by Fuente Roble, Baños, and Bejar across the chain of the Sierra de Gata, reached Plasencia on the 9th and Almaraz on the 11th. Marmont and the smaller column which had demonstrated against Spencer fell into the rear of the main body at Malpartida near Plasencia on the 14th [1]. The passage of the Tagus at Almaraz took longer than had been expected, because pontoons which had been ordered down from Madrid had failed to appear, and the whole army had to be ferried over by driblets on the flying-bridge already existing there. But though strung out over fifty miles of road by this mischance, the Army of Portugal at least got the advanced squadrons of its light cavalry to Truxillo on the 14th [2] and to Merida on the 17th. The head of the infantry column was a day's march behind, and reached Merida on the 18th, with the main body trailing down the mountain road from Truxillo behind it. Soult's advanced guard was already in possession of the town and bridge of Merida, and the junction of the Armies of Andalusia and Portugal was secured.

But meanwhile Wellington had retired from their neighbourhood. On the afternoon of the 10th the orders had been issued for the withdrawing of all the guns from the siege-batteries before Badajoz, and by the next morning many of them were already *en route* for Elvas. All through the 11th and 12th convoys of ammunition, platforms, fascines, wool-packs, &c., were being sent to the rear, and by the night of the last-named day

[1] Foy's *Mémoires*, ed. Girod de L'Ain, p. 146.

[2] According to a report brought to Wellington by a British intelligence-officer in that direction, as early as the 13th. But this is probably an error of a day. *Dispatches*, viii. p. 37.

there was nothing left in the trenches or the camps save a small daily store for the troops, who were kept to blockade the fortress as long as was prudent. For it was well that the garrison should be straitly shut in, and forced to consume as much of their provisions as possible; Wellington knew that they were only rationed up to the 20th, and there was a bare chance that Soult or Marmont might be delayed by some unforeseen mishap. Nothing of the kind happened, however, and on the 13th Soult began to stir. He had been joined by Drouet's long-expected corps on that morning; it had accomplished a most circuitous march from Valladolid, by Madrid, Toledo, the pass of Despeñaperros and Cordova, in which it had consumed more than a month (May 11th–June 13th). All Drouet's corps was composed of 4th battalions of regiments belonging to the 1st or 5th Corps, and the provisional brigade of cavalry which accompanied him consisted of 3rd and 4th squadrons belonging to dragoon regiments of the Army of the South. These were at once treated as drafts, and amalgamated with the depleted units which had been so much cut up at Albuera. The 5th Corps and the other regiments present with Soult had 4,000 men drafted into their ranks [1], and once more became strong. There remained over one provisional division, 5,000 strong, which consisted of 4th battalions whose regiments were absent with Victor before Cadiz [2]. Drouet's arrival gave Soult a total force of some 28,000 men, which made him still unable to face Wellington with his own unaided strength; but he knew that he could count on Marmont's approach with 30,000 more within a week.

If he pressed in upon Badajoz before the junction took place, he would risk the very real danger that Wellington might march against him with every available man, and force him to another battle. He therefore first sent cavalry along the high-

[1] The regiments which received a battalion were the 40th, 64th, 88th, 100th, 103rd, 21st and 28th Léger of the 5th Corps, and the 16th Léger. The cavalry regiments which received squadrons were the 4th, 14th, 26th Dragoons.

[2] The 4th batts. of the 8th, 54th, 63rd, 24th, 45th, 94th, 95th, and 96th Line, and the 9th and 27th Léger. There were also odd squadrons of the 1st, 2nd, and 9th Dragoons.

roads towards Villafranca and Los Santos, and only when they reported that there was no British infantry in front of them, moved up his main body to Villafranca and Almendralejo (June 16th). Reconnaissances were pushed towards the bridges of Merida and Medellin, where the Army of Portugal was to be expected. As he kept very far from Wellington's front, Soult's march was unmolested; the British general had concentrated the 4th and 2nd Divisions and Hamilton's Portuguese on the old Albuera position on the 14th of June, and could have brought up the 3rd and 7th and Ashworth's Portuguese to join them in a few hours. But he was not going to take offensive action, and since Soult kept well away from him, he waited till he had news that the two French armies would get in touch at Merida on the 17th, and retired with his whole army beyond the Guadiana on that day.

SECTION XXVII: CHAPTER II

WELLINGTON ON THE CAYA. JUNE–JULY 1811

On the morning of June 17th the five divisions of the Anglo-Portuguese army which had hitherto remained on the south bank of the Guadiana crossed that river, and retired to the positions along the line Elvas, Campo Mayor, Ouguella, which Wellington had already selected for them. The water was low, and the bulk of the troops used the fords between Jerumenha and Badajoz[1] which are practicable during the summer months, except after days of exceptional rain[2]. Head quarters were moved back to the country-house known as the Quinta de São, João, near São Vicente, a spot equidistant from Elvas and Campo Mayor. The 7th Division, from the north side of Badajoz, made a corresponding movement, and fell back into the same general line. Spencer's column from the Beira was now all across the Tagus, save Slade's cavalry and the 5th Division, and its head was resting at Portalegre, to which its rear was rapidly coming up. As there are only two marches between Portalegre and Elvas, it was clear that the two sections of the allied army were certain of their junction. For since on the 18th Marmont's column-head had only reached Merida, and Soult's was at Almendralejo, it would take some days for the two French armies to draw together, and concert further operations on the northern side of Badajoz.

But there was one section of the allied forces which Wellington was anxious not to withdraw across the Guadiana, but to send

[1] I follow Scovell, as an eye-witness, when he says that the bulk of the infantry crossed by the fords. Napier says they went over the flying-bridge below Badajoz (iii. p. 313). But Moyle Sherer (p. 167) says that the 2nd Division forded the Guadiana, and Vere's *Marches of the 4th Division* (p. 17) says the same of Cole's brigades.

[2] 'The principal ford is by Porta de Coito, but there are five or six between that spot and Badajoz.' Scovell's diary, June 17.

on another quest, and all his future movements depended on the march of this corps. The moment that Soult began to advance from Llerena on the 14th, and to edge off in the direction of Merida and Marmont, he had left the western roads into Andalusia uncovered. Except a trifling detachment at Guadalcanal, there was now no force protecting Seville on that side. From the day that he got the news of the Marshal's northerly march, Wellington began to press General Blake to return at once into his old haunts in the Condado de Niebla, passing round the left rear of the enemy, and to begin to threaten Seville. There was now nothing to prevent him from doing so, and it was well known that the Andalusian capital was left to a scanty garrison, largely composed of convalescents and untrustworthy *Juramentados*. As long as Soult lay at Llerena, he could easily throw a column to the flank to succour Seville; but when he had moved on, this was no longer in his power. As early as June 10 Wellington had written to Castaños [1] that Soult would ultimately move on Merida, and that Blake would then be able to slip into Andalusia either by the route of Xeres de los Caballeros and Fregenal, or if he preferred a safer though longer road, by that hugging the Portuguese frontier, following which he would emerge into Spain by Mertola. He could not be stopped on either route, and his appearance before Seville would bring back Soult in haste from Badajoz, and cure him of any desire to cross the Guadiana or to besiege Elvas. On June 12th Wellington ordered his commissaries to prepare rations at Mertola for the benefit of the Spaniards, who would probably be in their usual state of semi-starvation, and wrote to Blake to urge him to march at once [2]. The Captain-General consented to move, but asked for more food; he was told in reply that he should be fed from Jerumenha to Mertola while he was on Portuguese soil, but must rely on his own exertions while he was in Spain. On the morning of the 17th Blake crossed the Guadiana at Jerumenha with Loy's 1,000 horse, the 10,000 infantry of Zayas and Ballasteros, and two batteries, and started to march downstream for his destination. He was quite out of touch with

[1] *Dispatches*, vii, last two pages of the volume.

[2] *Dispatches*, viii. pp. 3–4, 19, 20.

the enemy, and so well protected by the Guadiana and the mountains that it was certain that his movement would be unobserved. Marching fast, he reached Mertola on June 22nd, and Castillejos, across the Andalusian frontier, on the 24th. Thus Wellington was serenely confident, when the enemy came up against his front, that he had thrown a bomb behind them, whose explosion would cause no small stir, and infallibly draw back a large section of the Army of Andalusia to defend Seville. Without these troops Soult would be in no condition to attack him [1], even with Marmont's aid. The crisis between Elvas and Badajoz, therefore, could only last for a few days.

Meanwhile it had to be faced, and from the 22nd to the 29th of June Wellington might have found himself engaged in a general action on any day of the week. Soult and Marmont had met at Merida on the 18th—the day after Wellington's army had crossed the Guadiana. The elder marshal had overwhelmed the younger with compliments—it was the first time, he said, that the Army of Portugal had done anything for the Army of the South; with a colleague who was unselfish and enterprising, he felt himself able to undertake any task [2]. It was settled that the combined armies should march against the Albuera positions next morning, in three columns. Marmont and his six divisions would move along the bank of the Guadiana by the road running through Lobon and Talavera Real: the main body of the Andalusian forces would take the route Almendralejo–Solana–Albuera. One division detached by Soult (it was the ten battalions of Conroux, the undistributed fraction of Drouet's 9th Corps) was to turn the British line by a flanking movement through Almendral to Valverde. Thus just 60,000 men were put in motion, Marmont having brought about 32,000 of all arms, while Soult, including Drouet, had about 28,000. Expecting an action, for Wellington was known to have been at Albuera on the 16th, and his departure was unsuspected, the three columns advanced cautiously, and ready to deploy. But

[1] See for his confidence in the combination his dispatch to Lord Liverpool of June 27. (*Dispatches*, viii. p. 57.)

[2] 'Il était dans l'ivresse de la joie et de la reconnaissance,' says Marmont (*Mémoires*, iv. p. 45). Soult's letters to Berthier give Marmont a handsome testimonial.

no enemy was found, and by the evening of the 19th it was known that the Anglo-Portuguese were all behind the Guadiana. At dusk the head of Marmont's light cavalry got in touch with the garrison of Badajoz, and learnt that the last of the Allies had disappeared from in front of its walls on the 16th. Phillipon was justified of his long and obstinate defence: on the very day before his half-rations would have given out, and at the moment when he was thinking seriously of blowing up his works, and making a dash to get away, the expected succours had appeared.

On the 20th Marmont entered Badajoz in triumph, amid the blare of military music, and a few hours later Soult arrived and exchanged felicitations with him and with the trusty governor. The two main columns of each of their armies converged on the fortress, but Briche's light cavalry and the divisions of Conroux and Godinot went to Olivenza, to see if by chance the Allies were holding that unlucky and ill-protected town. It was found empty (June 21st), the small Portuguese garrison having retired to Elvas on the 17th.

With 60,000 men in hand (or more, if the 3,500 bayonets of the Badajoz garrison are counted) and with one bridge and many good fords at their disposition, for the crossing of the Guadiana, the two marshals had the power to thrust a general action upon their adversary—unless indeed he should retire far beyond the Portuguese frontier, and so give them the chance of laying siege to Elvas. It remained to be seen what was his purpose, and on June 22nd a general reconnaissance on the further bank of the Guadiana was carried out. On the left Godinot's division advanced from Olivenza to a point opposite Jerumenha, where, being very visible from the further bank, it was furiously but ineffectively cannonaded by the Portuguese garrison. Two dragoon regiments under General Bron forded the river, but found no allied troops in this direction. On the right, Montbrun, with two cavalry brigades of the Army of Portugal, passed the Badajoz bridge, and marched on Campo Mayor. After driving in a cavalry screen belonging to De Grey's and Madden's regiments, he found himself feeling the front of a defensive line, which he estimated at two division of infantry and 1,400 horse, and could get no further for-

ward[1]. He returned to report that Wellington was showing fight.

In the centre, where Latour-Maubourg in person, with fourteen squadrons of dragoons and Polish lancers, forded the Guadiana almost in front of Elvas, there was hard fighting, ending in a petty disaster for the allied outposts. Here the cavalry screen was formed on the right by the 2nd Hussars of the King's German Legion, on the left by the 11th Light Dragoons. The French column drove in the pickets of the hussars, who resisted from the water's edge onward with great obstinacy. Presently the main body of this weak corps (only two squadrons strong[2]) came up, and with more courage than discretion charged the leading French regiment, which they broke. But being outflanked by the enemy's reserves, they were surrounded on three sides, and had to cut their way out with a loss of three officers wounded, two dead, and twenty prisoners. The remains of the hussars rallied behind the Quinta de Gremezia, where they were presently joined by the main body of the 11th Light Dragoons. The enemy pushed them no further, but turning to the right swept along Wellington's outpost line in the direction of Badajoz. By so doing they found themselves in the rear of the outlying picket of the 11th, formed by Captain Lutyens's troop. This little force had, by some mischance, not paid much attention to the disturbance in front of the hussars, nor had any orders been sent to them by their brigadier (Long) to bid them be cautious as to their flank. Warned at the last moment by a German sergeant, Lutyens had just collected his men, and was about to retire, when he saw a body of cavalry, not on his flank but directly in his rear, cutting him off from Elvas. Thinking that a bold dash was his only chance, he closed up his men and charged the front French squadron, which he broke through. But a second line was behind, and he and his whole

[1] The French reports show that Wellington was wrong in thinking (*Dispatches*, vol. viii, June 22) that the enemy got no glimpse of the British infantry. They apparently detected the 3rd and 7th Divisions.

[2] The remainder under Major von Busche was still at Cadiz. It will be remembered that it took a distinguished part in the battle of Barrosa.

party of sixty-four sabres were ridden down and captured[1]. Only one wounded officer (Lieutenant Binney) cut his way through and brought the news of the mishap[2].

Wellington, with his usual clear perception, attributed this little disaster to the fact that the two regiments engaged had both landed in the Peninsula only a few weeks before, and were utterly unpractised in outpost duty. The hussars ought to have retired skirmishing—it was not their duty to try to fight five regiments of French. The light dragoon pickets had clearly not kept touch with the detachments on their flanks, or they would have heard of the advance of the enemy in force, and would not have been surrounded before they were aware that the French had got well round their rear. 'This disagreeable circumstance,' he writes, 'tends to show the difference between old and new troops. The old regiments of cavalry, throughout all their service, with all their losses put together, have not lost so many men as the 2nd Hussars and the 11th Light Dragoons in a few days. However, we must make the new as good as the old[3].' Wellington also blamed General Long. 'Let him attend to the directions he before received from Sir Stapleton Cotton, to throw out only *small picquets of observation* on the Caya and Guadiana. If he had had his whole brigade, instead of one large picquet, on the Caya, he could not have prevented the enemy from advancing. . . . . This principle is well known and understood in the army, and if it had not been acted upon invariably, we should have lost all our cavalry long ago, in the way in which Captain Lutyens lost the picquet of the 11th this morning[4].'

[1] The loss was 8 killed, 1 officer and 20 men wounded, 1 officer and 35 men unwounded prisoners.

[2] There are two good accounts of this skirmish near Quinta de Gremezia, one in a letter by Captain von Stolzenburg of the hussars (in Schwertfeger's *History of the K.G.L.*, ii. 247), the other by George Farmer, a trooper of the 11th Light Dragoons, whose little autobiography was published by Gleig in 1844, under the title of *The Light Dragoon*, see vol. i. pp. 92–7. Farmer says that the French dragoons in their rear were taken at first for Portuguese squadrons coming up from Elvas to reinforce the line.

[3] Wellington to Lord Liverpool, *Dispatches*, viii. p. 58.

[4] Wellington to Erskine (then commanding the cavalry division to which the 11th belonged), June 22. *Dispatches*, viii. p. 40.

By the evening of the 22nd the two French marshals, as the result of their wide-spreading reconnaissances, were fully aware that Wellington lay in force from Campo Mayor to Elvas, and had no intention of retiring. But they had not been able to make out the details of his position, which lay across an undulating country wooded in many parts, and not to be embraced in a single view from any commanding spot. As a matter of fact their adversary had now got up all his troops; the last division from the Beira came into touch with the main body on the morning of the 23rd. Elaborate orders issued for the conduct of the army in case the French should advance for battle, show what were the intentions of Wellington [1].

His front extended from Ouguella near the Gebora river almost to Elvas, a distance of twelve miles. Ouguella was a little town with mediaeval fortifications, susceptible of defence for some hours. It was garrisoned by two companies of Portuguese from Elvas. Beyond it rises the mountain of the Dos Hermanas, and there is no practicable route to turn it, save by an immense détour in the direction of Albuquerque, so that the flank was very secure. Between Ouguella and Campo Mayor lay the 3rd and 7th Divisions under Picton. Campo Mayor had been repaired since its recapture, and had received a Portuguese garrison; it had some heavy guns (24-pounders) which would sweep the level ground in front of it. West of this fortress lay the allied centre under Hill, composed of the 2nd and 4th Divisions and Hamilton's Portuguese, extending from Campo Mayor to the Caya. Beyond that river in the direction of Elvas, in a somewhat 'refused' position leaning backward to the north-west, lay the three brigades of the 1st Division, under Spencer, forming the right wing, and resting on the great fortress as their flank-guard. This formed the front line. The reserves were the Light Division on the Monte Reguingo in front of Arronches, ready to support Picton, and the 5th and 6th Divisions, which were on the Portalegre road, échelonned in advance from that place, behind Spencer, and able to reinforce the right or

[1] They exist in the D'Urban papers, though not printed in the Wellington dispatches, and fall into three sections: What is to be done if the French attack (1) the left (near Campo Mayor); (2) the centre (along the Caya); (3) the right (by Elvas).

centre. The cavalry was out in front, Madden's Portuguese on the left, Long's brigade on the right, with De Grey's, Slade's, and Anson's regiments ready in reserve to transfer themselves where they should be wanted[1]. The whole force available was about 46,000 infantry, of which 29,000 were British, 5,000 cavalry, of which 1,400 belonged to the weak Portuguese brigades of Madden, Otway, and Barbaçena, and 14 batteries with 80 pieces and 2,800 gunners. The gross total was 54,000, not including two regular and two militia regiments of Portuguese forming the garrison of Elvas. Thus the allied army, though still appreciably inferior in numbers to the enemy, more especially in the cavalry arm, was strong enough to take the defensive in a good position[2]. Every available regular unit in

[1] This description of the allied position differs, it may be noted, from Napier's (iii. p. 314), where it is said that the 1st Division was retained at Portalegre as a general reserve. I think that this is an error for the 5th Division—perhaps a printer's error perpetuated through many editions—like some others in his great work. For the journals of the Guards' brigade of the 1st Division (Stothert, p. 259; Stepney, p. 130) show that it left Portalegre on the 19th, and was at Santa Ollaya near Elvas on the 23rd. Oddly enough, Lord Londonderry makes the same mistake (ii. 170), saying that Spencer was kept back at Portalegre with his whole corps (i. e. the 1st, 5th, 6th Divisions). Gomm's diary (p. 226) vouches for the 5th and 6th being near Portalegre on the 24th.

[2] The last morning states of the army, those of mid June, give a total for the British of 1,843 officers and 33,205 men of all arms fit for service. Roughly the details are: Cavalry, 3,600; 1st Division, 5,000; 2nd Division, 4,100; 3rd Division, 3,300; 4th Division, 3,300; 5th Division, 3,200; 6th Division, 3,100; 7th Division (including Alten's brigade), 3,000; Light Division, 2,900; Artillery, Engineers, &c., 2,300. Portuguese units: three weak cavalry brigades (Madden, Otway, Barbaçena), 1,400; nine and a half infantry brigades (Ashworth, Pack, Power, Spry, Collins, Campbell, Fonseca, Harvey, Coleman, and Elder's Caçadores) varying from 1,500 to 2,200 bayonets, 17,000; Artillery, 800. I cannot understand Napier's statement that there were only 14,000 Portuguese present, 17,000 seeming the lowest possible figure. Wellington (to Lord Liverpool, June 24) says that he has 41,000 effective *rank and file* of infantry; adding (as usual) one-eighth more for officers, sergeants, and staff, we get 46,000 total for infantry. Now 29,000 being certainly British (as by return above) there must be 17,000 Portuguese of all ranks, which tallies with the figure above. The artillery details are from the *Dickson Papers*, ed. Leslie, i. p. 407. D'Urban, under July 15th (when a regiment or two, e. g. the 68th, had joined from Lisbon), says that the allied total of *rank and file* was: Infantry, 44,600;

Portugal had been gathered in by the 23rd, even Pack's and Barbaçena's small Portuguese brigades, which had remained down to the last possible moment in the Beira. The ground was most formidable for defence, covered by three fortresses, and having in its front an open plain which, though interspersed with occasional groves, was sufficiently commanded by the heights on the British flanks to make it impossible for any large body of troops to move across it in any direction without being detected. Wellington had placed observation parties at the many 'Atalayas,' the old Moorish watch-towers, which line the Portuguese frontier, and had arranged for a system of flag-signalling to convey news from one flank to the other. There were also warnings to be given by gun-fire, from pieces detailed for that purpose at Ouguella and Campo Mayor[1]. The cross-roads along the rear of the position being good, and the Caya fordable in many places, Wellington thought that he was certain of being able to transfer troops with swiftness and security to any part of the line that might be threatened. The only way in which the enemy could approach him unseen would be by moving at night, and even so there would be ample warning, since the cavalry pickets were out far in front of the line, and would give notice betimes. Moreover, a night-march of some nine miles out from Badajoz over unknown ground, towards an undiscovered position, would have little temptation for the enemy. The danger of blundering into a trap in the dark would be too great.

But as a matter of fact the French Marshals were not proposing to attack. They had learnt that Spencer's divisions were up, so that the whole of the Anglo-Portuguese army was in front of them, and they shrank from committing themselves to a general action. Marmont wrote to Berthier on June 21st, Soult on June 22nd, and in neither of their dispatches is there the least intention displayed of making any further offensive move. Both state that they intended to attack the Albuera position on the 19th, if Wellington had stayed in it. 'The enemy,' says Marmont,

Cavalry, 4,200; Artillery, 2,200 = 51,000 in all, or adding officers and sergeants, &c., about 57,500. This seems a high estimate for the infantry, but low for the cavalry and artillery.

[1] All these details are set out in full in the orders copied in D'Urban's diary.

'retired in haste, repassed the Guadiana, and returned into Portugal, without leaving us any chance of tackling him. It is tiresome that he would not make trial of his fortune, for a decisive victory would infallibly have marked our arrival in this region.' Soult, in very similar terms, writes: 'The Duke of Ragusa and I had resolved to give battle, but Lord Wellington prudently retreated before we could come up with him. Yet he had 60,000 men, of whom 30,000 were English, including General Spencer's divisions just drawn in from the north, 14,000 Portuguese, and 16,000 Spaniards; there were 5,000 cavalry among them. It is vexatious that no general action could take place: our success would not be doubtful. But we may hope that another occasion may present itself, especially if the Army of Portugal continues to keep in touch with the Army of the South, and communicates with it, as it is now doing. Of that I have no doubt, from the alacrity with which the Duke of Ragusa marched to join in the relief of Badajoz with all his disposable forces.' Soult then proceeds to state with great gravity that Albuera was a signal victory, and the sole cause of the preservation of Badajoz—ignoring the fact that he retreated sixty miles after it, and could not move again till he had been joined by Drouet and Marmont [1].

If Soult wanted another signal victory of the type of Albuera he had only to march nine miles towards Campo Mayor, on the day after he wrote this dispatch to Berthier. The temptation was surely great, since the defeat of Wellington's army would have shaken to its foundations the whole defence of the Peninsula. To assemble the force now lying by Badajoz, Andalusia and Leon had been stripped of all disposable troops, and left exposed to the raids of the Spanish Armies of Galicia and Murcia, and to the omnipresent guerrilleros, who had already cut communications in every direction. If Wellington could be beaten, the concentration was justified; if he were left unmolested nothing had been gained, save the reprovisioning of Badajoz—and the game might go on for ever. Battle was now offered to the Marshals if they chose to accept it—the recon-

[1] These two noteworthy dispatches are accessible in the Appendix to vol. i of Belmas, to those who have not time to visit the Paris Archives.

ESTREMADURA
Scale of Miles
10
0
10
20
Portalegre
Sierra de San Mamed
Albuquerque
R. Gebora
Azumar
Arronches
R. de Caya
Ouguela
Monforte
Campo Mayor
Torre del Fresno
to Truxillo
Medellin
Barbacena
Ponte de Caya
Montijo
Merida
FL.
Elvas
Badajoz
Talavera Real
Lobon
R. Albuera
Villa Viciosa
R. Olivenza
Jerumenha
Albuera
Solana
Almendralejo
R. Matachel
Olivenza
Valverde
Azeuchal
Sta. Marta
Almendral
Villafranca
Hornachos
Villalba
Ribera
Barcarrota
Fuente del Maestre
Alconchel
Feria
Salvatierra de los Barros
Hinojosa
Moncaras
Zafra
Los Santos
Maguilla
Burguillos
Usagre
Mourao
Xeres de los Caballeros
Canta Gallo
Villagarcia
Oliva
Fuente Cantos
Llerena
R. Guadiana
R. Ardila
Fregenal
Segura de Leon
Moura
Fuentes de Leon
Monasterio
FL. Fort La Lippe
B.Y. Darbishire, Oxford, 1911
Chaussée
Ordinary Road

naissance of June 22nd proved that the Allies had taken up a position and were standing on it.

But neither Soult nor Marmont would advance. The cause of their reluctance to engage was undoubtedly a moral one. As Napier very truly remarks in a typical sentence [1], 'Marmont's army was conscious of its recent defeats at Bussaco, at Sabugal, at Fuentes de Oñoro; the horrid field of Albuera was fresh; the fierce blood there spilt still reeked in the nostrils of Soult's soldiers.' The generals, no less than the rank and file, felt a qualm at the idea of attacking Wellington in a position which he had taken up with deliberation, and where he showed himself serenely expectant of their attack. They were aware that an attempt to dislodge him would be rendered very tiresome by the fact that Elvas and Campo Mayor protected his line. They over-valued his forces by the number of Blake's army, which, till the 24th June, they wrongly supposed to be still with him. So contenting themselves with dictating pompous dispatches concerning the importance of the relief of Badajoz—which was indeed a notable advantage—they went each upon his separate way. Instead of attempting to inflict a defeat on Wellington, the Marshals did no more than patch up a scheme by which they thought he might be contained and held in check for the present. In short, the offensive spirit was gone: the French armies in Spain found themselves thrown upon the defensive; and so things were to remain for the rest of the Peninsular War. The offensive, though it was hardly realized as yet, had passed to Wellington [2].

[1] vol. iii. p. 316.

[2] Napier (iii. p. 317) suggests that since the stores of Elvas had run low, and its ammunition reserve in especial had been much depleted by the expenditure of shot and shell before Badajoz, the place was in such a dangerous condition that 'Soult (had he known this state of affairs) might have passed the Guadiana by the fords, and by means of his pontoons from Badajoz, might have overpowered the Allies' right, invested Elvas, and covered his army by lines, unless indeed the English general, anticipating the attempt, defeated him between the Caya and Elvas. This might not have been easy in an open country, which offered every advantage to the overwhelming cavalry and artillery of the French.' With all humility, I must express my doubts as to the wisdom or practicability of this course. An army of 60,000 men, with another of 54,000 in its front, cannot, surely, venture to form the siege of a first-class

Meanwhile the Allies could not tell what might be the intentions of the enemy. Seeing the enormous advantage that a victory would bring the French, and remembering the way in which they had stripped all Spain of troops in order to produce the army which now lay opposite him, Wellington thought that he was to be attacked, and continued for some days to perfect his preparations. The period of intent waiting was from the 23rd to the 28th of June, during which nothing was to be made out concerning the main purpose of the French. Petty cavalry reconnaissances in the direction of the Albuquerque and Montijo roads, much moving about of small columns between Olivenza and Badajoz, were observed—but no certain deductions could be drawn from them. 'No judging what he means yet: meanwhile everything is ready for him,' wrote D'Urban, Beresford's chief of the staff, in his diary on June 25th. As a matter of fact, the small movements hitherto observed were merely matters of foraging and exploration, and had no occult meaning. On the 27th, however, there was something definite to be learnt; on the morning of that day Godinot's division blew up the walls of Olivenza, and marched to Valverde. This disappearance of the French left wing *might* have meant that all the columns were being drawn in for an attack in the centre; but it might also mean that Soult was about to send back troops to Seville. That the latter was the true interpretation was shown on the 28th, when Godinot definitely marched not towards Badajoz, but southward along the *chaussée* leading to Andalusia by Los Santos and Monasterio. It was certain that, if Soult was sending away men from the front, he could not be intending to attack, since every man would be required, if a dash at the Anglo-Portuguese lines was in contemplation. When Wellington had news from the peasantry of Godinot's southward march on the 29th June, he could see that the die had been cast, and that he need no longer look for an attack upon his lines. He was soon afterwards informed that two divisions were gone southward, not

fortress unless it has previously beaten the covering army in a general action. Napier suggests that Soult should push back Wellington's right and surround Elvas. But the attempt *must* have brought on a general action, close under the walls of Elvas, in which the Allies would have had every advantage of position.

merely one; but for some time he could get no certitude of the departure of the second division, though it was perfectly true that this unit (Conroux's ten battalions of Drouet's old corps) had departed almost immediately after Godinot.

What had happened was that on June 24th, the fourth day after the entry of the two Marshals into Badajoz, Soult had informed Marmont that he had such bad news from Andalusia that he must return at once to Seville with some of his troops. It was not so much Blake's diversion which was working [1]—the French had learnt of his start on the 24th, but did not know that he had reached the Condado de Niebla—as the tidings of the spread of the insurrection in the Ronda mountains, and of threatening movements by Freire's Army of Murcia against the 4th Corps. The force in Eastern Andalusia had lent so much to Soult's field army [2], and so much more to garrison the province of Cordova [3], that it was much under strength. There were only 9,000 men, or less, left in the kingdom of Granada, and the Murcian army was 14,000 strong. Marmont refused to take Soult's fears seriously, being (as he himself tells us [4]) convinced by this time that his colleague was wanting to throw all the responsibility of keeping Badajoz safe and 'containing' Wellington on the Army of Portugal. He replied that unless Soult promised to leave him the whole of the 5th Corps, and all Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, he should order his troops to march for Truxillo and Almaraz, and throw the charge of Badajoz on the Army of the South, which might keep it if it could.

Soult was forced to assent to this demand, and took away only Godinot's and Conroux's provisional divisions, and three regiments of cavalry. The 5th Corps, now placed under Drouet [5], and six dragoon regiments, were left behind on the Guadiana, to enable

[1] Soult's dispatch of June 24 says that he has just heard that Blake has gone off southward.

[2] Four battalions, two cavalry regiments, and a battery had been lent for the field army.

[3] Of the four regiments garrisoning that region three (12th Léger, 51st, 55th) had joined the Albuera army. Sebastiani had to lend several battalions to take their place.

[4] See *Mémoires*, iv. p. 47.

[5] i. e. two infantry divisions, and Briche's light cavalry, 14,000 men, since the drafts had come under Drouet.

Marmont to maintain a safe defensive against Wellington. They made up some 15,000 men, which, with the 32,000 of the Army of Portugal, provided a force quite insufficient to attack the Allies, yet large enough to prevent a siege of Badajoz. For no general, least of all the cautious commander of the Anglo-Portuguese army, would undertake to besiege a fortress of the first class, situated on two sides of a broad river, with 54,000 men, when a covering force of 47,000 men was supporting it in the near vicinity.

Meanwhile, for a fortnight after Soult had departed from Badajoz for Seville on June 28th, Marmont and Drouet on one side of the Guadiana, and Wellington on the other, stood observing each other, and waiting each for some move on the part of his adversary. The British general knew that the French in his front were no longer strong enough to attack him on his positions around the Caya. But he must keep his army concentrated, since, if he made detachments in any direction, Marmont might yet make a dash at Elvas; and that place, though it had been much improved of late[1], during the weeks when an attack on it seemed probable, still left something to be desired, especially in the quality of the guns on its walls—our old acquaintances of the siege of Badajoz, and their brethren. As long as Marmont and Drouet remained massed near Badajoz the allied army could not disperse.

On the other hand, the French generals were compelled to keep together for a time, in order to superintend the victualling of Badajoz, whose magazines were absolutely empty at the moment of its relief. If they had drawn back into cantonments, and scattered their men, Wellington might have thrown a light corps and cavalry across the Guadiana, and have established once more a blockade of the fortress. Accordingly, from the 28th of June to the 15th of July the Army of Portugal and the 5th Corps remained concentrated in the quadrilateral Badajoz–Merida–Almendralejo–Almendral, sweeping the country-side for provisions. Each regiment was ordered to deposit in the

[1] When a siege seemed probable General Leite demolished a number of houses and trees too close to the walls, improved the works by clearing the ditch and strengthening parapets, and did his best to draw in all available provisions. This last was hard, when so large a friendly army was close at hand, eating up the country-side.

magazines of Badajoz a prescribed number of *fanegas* of wheat or maize, making in all six months' rations for a garrison of 4,000 men. North of the Guadiana the French cavalry ranged about the region around Montijo and Torre del Fresno, where they were in constant touch with Wellington's exploring squadrons sent out from Campo Mayor and Ouguella: but no serious collisions occurred. At last, on July 15th it was reported that Badajoz was fully provisioned, and Marmont informed Drouet that he was about to disperse his army in cantonments reaching as far as the Tagus, since northern Estremadura was wholly exhausted. He would keep a division at Truxillo, halfway between Merida and the Tagus, and the rest of his army could be brought back at the shortest notice, if the Anglo-Portuguese should make a forward move. Drouet, after changing the garrison of Badajoz for new battalions of the same regiments which had endured the two sieges of May and June, and confiding its charge once more to the trusty Phillipon, drew back the 5th Corps to Zafra, Los Santos, and Merida, leaving Briche's light cavalry at Santa Marta to keep the communication with Badajoz open. The Marshal and the general calculated that if Wellington should once more come forward, they could join again at Merida in six or seven days to 'contain' him. He could do nothing against Badajoz in the short time that would elapse before their concentration.

But Wellington had for the present no further designs against the fortress which had cost him so much useless labour. The moment that Marmont's departure was announced to him, he too dispersed his army into cantonments. The banks of the Caya and Guadiana were notorious for their fever, and the troops were already beginning to suffer from it. On the 18th of July orders were issued for the 3rd and 6th Divisions to march for Castello Branco, the 7th for Niza, the 1st and 5th for Portalegre, the 4th for Estremos and then for Pedrogão, the Light Division for Castello de Vide and Montalvão. Only the 2nd and Hamilton's Portuguese remained in the neighbourhood of Elvas—the former at Villa Viçosa, the latter at Fronteira and Souzel, a little further to the north-west [1]. Hill retained charge of these

[1] Elaborate marching arrangements, and timing for all these destinations, are found in D'Urban's diary under July 18.

two divisions, which formed the Anglo-Portuguese Army of the South for the next twelve months. His allowance of cavalry consisted of Barbaçena's and Otway's Portuguese brigades, and Long's and De Grey's British brigades, which are for the future spoken of as the 'second cavalry division' of the allied army. Its command was given not to Lumley, who had used the troops so effectively during the late campaign, for he had just gone on sick leave to England. It went to Sir William Erskine, of whom Wellington could find no more to say, when proposing him to Beresford for this post, than that he would at any rate do better than Long, and that, if very blind, 'which is against him at the head of cavalry,' he was at any rate very cautious[1]. The fact was that Erskine had given grave dissatisfaction at Sabugal and elsewhere, and that the Commander-in-Chief wished to shunt him on to some new line, where he would have less responsibility. Yet the experiment of trusting him with two cavalry brigades was a risky one!

There was more reorganization carried out in the allied army during the months of June, July, and August 1811 than at any other period of Wellington's command. Owing to the arrival of more cavalry regiments,[2] there were by September 1st six cavalry brigades in existence instead of three, and they contained thirteen regiments instead of the original seven which had served in 1810 and the early months of 1811. Wellington's mounted strength had been almost doubled—though most of the corps arrived too late to be available when the French were showing such a preponderant cavalry force on the Caya in June. But in the next campaign Wellington was to be, for the first time

[1] *Dispatches*, vii. p. 503.

[2] The new arrivals were (see Atkinson's 'British Army in the Peninsula' in *English Historical Review* for 1907): 2nd Hussars K.G.L. (15th April), 11th Light Dragoons (by June 1), 12th Light Dragoons (by July 1), 9th Light Dragoons (by August 1), 3rd Dragoons and 4th Dragoon Guards (before September 1). The brigading became—1st Division (Stapleton Cotton): Slade's brigade, 1st Royals and 12th Light Dragoons; Anson's brigade, 14th and 16th Light Dragoons; Alten's brigade, 11th Light Dragoons, 1st Hussars K.G.L.; Le Marchant's brigade, 3rd Dragoons and 4th Dragoon Guards. 2nd Division (Erskine): Long's brigade, 2nd Hussars K.G.L., 9th and 13th Light Dragoons; De Grey's brigade, 3rd Dragoon Guards, 4th Dragoons.

since his arrival in the Peninsula, possessed of an adequate proportion of mounted men.

As to the infantry, the 1st Division (as we have already seen [1]) had given a brigade to the 2nd to repair the losses of Albuera. The 2nd Division had taken over Howard's brigade from the 1st, and had consolidated the remains of Colborne's and Hoghton's shattered regiments from two brigades into one. The 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Divisions were comparatively little altered, getting, between them all, only two more battalions on balance, after replacing certain old ones by newly arrived units [2]. But the 7th Division, hitherto containing only one British brigade (Sontag's) was provided with a second one, by taking in Alten's light infantry battalions, which had fought so well at Albuera.

The net result of all this change was that, when Wellington once more divided his army into a northern and a southern force in August, the latter (now under Hill) amounted to about 9,000 bayonets and nearly 4,000 sabres. This detachment having four cavalry brigades (five British and four Portuguese regiments) was able to 'contain' its normal adversary in Estremadura, Drouet's 9th Corps, which had about the same number of cavalry and two or three thousand more infantry. Hill's regular task was to cover Elvas and to keep Drouet in check, without committing himself to any large offensive operations, for which his force was manifestly inadequate.

But the Anglo-Portuguese northern corps, or main army, was now far stronger than it had ever been before, amounting to

[1] See p. 435.

[2] To go into details, the 1st Division not only gave over Howard's brigade (50th, 71st, 92nd) to Hill, but sent home the 7th Line battalion of the K.G.L., whose rank and file were drafted into the three senior Line battalions of that corps. From the 2nd Division the 2/28th, 29th, 2/39th, 2/48th went home, and the 1/48th was transferred to the 4th Division: but the 1/28th and 1/39th came out to Portugal and joined. The 3rd Division got one new battalion (77th) in July. In the 4th Division the 1/7th and 2/7th were amalgamated, but the number of battalions was kept as before by the transference of the 1/48th from the 2nd Division. The 6th Division got one new unit, the 2/32nd. The 7th Division took over Alten's K.G.L. light battalions, and received the 68th, but sent home the 85th, after it had been only seven months in the Peninsula. Wellington refused to keep this regiment, which on its return to England went through a series of court-martials, testifying to grave internal faults.

some 46,000 men, including 5,000 cavalry. It now became for the first time decidedly superior in numbers to its special opponent, the French Army of Portugal, which even after receiving its drafts and convalescents in the autumn did not amount to quite 40,000 men, and was very weak in cavalry, of which it did not possess more than 3,000. Clearly, then, for the future Marmont could not possibly take the offensive against Wellington with his own forces, and would have to depend for help on the Army of the North, if matters came to a crisis. He would be lucky if he were able to 'contain' the Anglo-Portuguese, and certainly could not think of doing more, unless he were able to get prompt reinforcements from Bessières—or, after that Marshal's departure, from his successor, Dorsenne. Indeed, the Army of Portugal was so clearly inadequate to discharge the function of protecting the whole Spanish frontier from the Guadiana to the Douro, that the Emperor, though in October he once more proposed to Marmont an invasion of Portugal, was ultimately forced to make over to it 16,000 men from the Army of the North, the divisions of Souham and Bonnet [1]. But of this more in its own place. It must suffice here to say that the net results of the spring and summer campaigns of 1811 was to leave the French decidedly on the defensive all along the Portuguese border, and to transfer to Wellington the opportunity of trying the offensive. It was to be five months, however, before he succeeded in taking it up—his autumn operations of 1811 were tentative, and led to no definite results. From July to December there was much manœuvring, but little change came of it.

[1] This was done by an Imperial decree issued on December 13th through Berthier.

SECTION XXVII: CHAPTER III

EVENTS IN THE NORTH OF SPAIN DURING THE CONCENTRATION ON THE CAYA. JUNE–AUGUST 1811

It is often forgotten by English writers that while the armies of Wellington, Soult, and Marmont faced each other near Badajoz in June–July 1811, only in the end to depart in different directions without a battle, there was a second and minor crisis going on in the north, which had important consequences. Wellington had designedly brought it about, because without it the French would have had much larger forces disposable for action against Portugal, and might have given much trouble by demonstrating against the Beira frontier.

When Marmont and Sir Brent Spencer, moving in parallel columns, transferred themselves in ten days from the banks of the Agueda and the Tormes to those of the Guadiana, the north-eastern angle of Portugal was almost stripped of troops. There remained only the militia divisions of Silveira [1] north of the Douro, in the province of Tras-os-Montes, and of Wilson and Trant south of the Douro, in front of Guarda and Celorico. The whole did not amount to 12,000 men, of inferior quality. Fortunately the French Army of Portugal had gone southward *en masse*. Marmont had left nothing behind him save the garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo and a great dépôt of convalescents, dismounted dragoons, and other odds and ends, at Salamanca. From them there was nothing to be feared.

But behind Salamanca lay Bessières's Army of the North. The Duke of Istria had, very unwillingly, pledged himself to Marmont to take over the supervision of the frontiers of Leon, when the Army of Portugal marched for Badajoz. He had declared, when asked for help in May, that he had not a man to spare

[1] Silveira had only one infantry regiment of regulars (no. 24) and two squadrons of regular dragoons, as also two batteries of old artillery. Wilson had one squadron of regular dragoons.

after providing for the duty already incumbent on him of holding down all Old Castile, Asturias, and Santander. As the Emperor kept assuring him, by angry dispatches from Paris, this was an exaggeration [1]. It was in his power to collect a small field army of 12,000 or 15,000 men, without giving up any essential point in his extensive sphere of operations; and in July he did so, much against his inclination, and suffered no harm by so doing. If such a force had been set to threaten northern Portugal during the concentration on the Caya, Wellington would have felt most uncomfortable. But occupation was found for Bessières from another quarter, and this was part of the British commander's general scheme for the defence of the Peninsula. With the consent of General Castaños, since he could only suggest and not command any operations to be undertaken by Spanish troops, Wellington had provided for an attack on the flank of Bessières by a force of which we have heard nothing for many months—the Army of Galicia [2]. If threatened on the Esla and the Orbigo, Bessières would be able to spare no attention for the Agueda.

At this time the Army of the North was not so strong in numbers as it became a few weeks later, when Napoleon's 'divisions of Reserve' began to cross the Pyrenees. In June, 1811 it consisted of only four infantry divisions, those of Generals Bonnet, Serras, Roguet, and Dumoustier, and of two brigades of cavalry under Wathier and Lepic. Bonnet's division had been holding the central region of the Asturias and the city of Oviedo since it had conquered them in January 1810. In addition it had occupied a string of ports from Gijon to Santander, in order to keep off the English cruisers from their communication with the guerrilleros of the Cantabrian hills. Bonnet had a strong force, four full regiments of infantry, making 8,000 men, yet could never complete the conquest of the Asturias. Wherever he struck with a strong force he could

[1] See especially Berthier to Bessières, of May 19, from Rambouillet.

[2] See especially Wellington to General Walker (British attaché with the Army of Galicia), *Dispatches*, vii. p. 648, where the siege of Astorga and the troubling of Bonnet in Asturias are the operations recommended. Castaños was still titular Captain-General in Galicia as well as in Estremadura.

penetrate, but any move far from his base at Oviedo brought down the enemy upon some of his isolated posts, which he had then to rescue by a swift return. His enemies were on the left hand the relics of the old Spanish Army of Asturias, now under General Losada, who hung about the mountains on the Galician frontier—on the right the great partisan chiefs Porlier and Longa, whose beat was in the sierras above Santander.

On the left of Bonnet lay Bessières's second division, that of Serras, which had originally been assigned to the Army of Portugal in 1810, but had remained behind to watch the Galician Spaniards. Its head quarters were at Benavente; it held Astorga as an advanced post, and Leon as a flank-guard. From the latter place it communicated with Bonnet through the pass of Pajares. This was an enormous front for a division of 6,000 men to occupy, and that, too, one not composed of picked troops, but of miscellaneous units. For Serras had two Italian regiments (32nd Léger, 113th Line[1]) and two Polish and two Swiss battalions, so that much the larger half of his men were auxiliary troops and not native French.

On the other hand, there was nothing left to be desired in the two divisions of Roguet and Dumoustier, which held the central position in Bessières's cantonments: they were all troops of the Young Guard, eleven regiments of *tirailleurs*, *chasseurs*, and *voltigeurs*; attached to them were three composite regiments of guard cavalry and a proportion of artillery—the whole made up of 15,000 men of the best quality. Dumoustier's division was cantoned within the provinces of Valladolid and Palencia, Roguet's within that of Burgos. On the south they had no enemies save the guerrilleros of the Guadarama and the Avila and Soria sierras, tiresome and elusive but not formidable foes. On the north, in the Liebaña and the Cantabrian hills, Longa and Porlier were much more troublesome and dangerous. Their bands were well armed, and organized on the principles of a regular army, yet had not lost the power of rapid movement which was the true strength of the *partida* system. The sierras in which they operated were, including their foot-hills, some fifty

[1] The 113th were a new Tuscan regiment, raised in 1809, which had been practically destroyed in Catalonia, and sent home to recruit. The 32nd Léger was Genoese.

miles broad, a chaos of passes and ravines. Countless expeditions against them had led to no final result. Like the holy men of old, when persecuted in one region they merely fled to another. If the flying columns and petty garrisons were withdrawn for a moment, they would be at the gates of Burgos or Santander within two days, and the high-roads Burgos–Vittoria and Burgos–Valladolid, the main arteries of communication with France, would be cut.

There was soon to be a fifth division in Bessières's army, but it had not yet arrived from France—that of Souham, which formed (along with the divisions of Caffarelli and Reille) the great reinforcement poured by Napoleon into northern Spain during the late summer of 1811. But in June it was only beginning to march up from Marseilles, Turin, and Spezia, the distant garrisons from which it was to be drawn [1]. Before it arrived in Spain Bessières had ceased to command the Army of the North, and Dorsenne had taken his place. Hence (though Wellington was not aware of the fact) the months of June and July were exceptionally favourable for a move against the French flank in this direction.

In addition to his four infantry divisions, Bessières possessed Wathier's brigade of light cavalry, and Lepic's brigade of guard cavalry, together with some unbrigaded units such as the 130th of the Line (the fixed garrison of Santander) [2], the battalion of Neuchâtel, which he had moved forward to Salamanca, a number of squadrons of *gendarmes*, and a quantity of drafts for the Armies of Portugal and the Centre, which had been stopped on their way south in a surreptitious fashion, by various post-commanders who wanted to strengthen their depleted detachments. In the autumn Marmont succeeded in extracting no less than 4,000 of his own men from the territories of the Army of the North, not without much friction with the local officers who wished to detain them [3].

[1] For details of its movements see Napoleon's *Correspondance*, 17,784, June 8th, 1811.

[2] This was a newly created regiment, formed out of a number of provisional battalions, which had been doing garrison duty in Biscay for the last year.

[3] Bessières grossly underrated his own force in a letter to Berthier of June 6th, in which he stated the whole at only 44,000 men.

The whole force between the borders of Navarre and those of Portugal was in June and July not less than 60,000 men, even before the three divisions of Souham, Reille, and Caffarelli came up from France. On the other hand, they had an enormous area to keep down, not less than a fifth of the whole surface of Spain. And if their regular enemies, the Armies of Galicia and Asturias, were weak, they had among the irregulars opposed to them the boldest and the most obstinate of all the guerrillero chiefs. Any serious move against a section of Bessières's long line would cause disturbance over the whole of his viceroyalty, since to collect a serious force he would have to cut down the garrisons of many localities below danger-point.

It was on this fact that Wellington relied when he obtained Castaños's leave to set the Spanish Army of Galicia in motion. It was fortunately led at this moment by an active and enterprising chief, Santocildes, the hero of the defence of Astorga in 1810, who lent himself eagerly to the plan, though his army was not in good order. The cadres left behind in the north, when del Parque moved into Estremadura in the winter of 1809–10, were the worst and weakest of the old Army of Galicia, and though they had been filled up with local recruits, till the whole force had a nominal strength of 21,000 men, the organization was bad, and the want of well-trained and capable regimental officers very noticeable. The Junta of Galicia had spent more energy in 1810 on quarrels with the Captain-General Mahy than on the equipment of its army. Its weakest point was that it possessed only 600 regular cavalry—a defect that must be fatal if it left the mountains to descend into the plains of Leon. It was for this reason that Wellington advised Santocildes to form the siege of Astorga, to harass Bonnet in the Asturias, but not to quit the skirts of the friendly sierras.

On taking over charge of the whole kingdom of Leon from Marmont, Bessières came to the conclusion that he must draw in troops towards the south, lest he should be caught in a position in which he had no disposable central mass towards the Douro. Consequently on the 6th of June he sent orders to Bonnet to evacuate the Asturias and fall back by the pass of Pajares to Leon, in order to place himself in closer touch with Serras.[1] On

[1] See Bessières to Berthier of June 6th, from Valladolid.

the 14th, therefore, Bonnet left Oviedo and came over the mountains with three of his regiments, while the fourth went eastward parallel to the coast, in the direction of Santander, picking up in its retreat all the small garrisons which had been left to dominate the Asturian ports, and to prevent communication between Longa and Porlier and the English cruisers. By the 17th Bonnet lay at Leon with 6,000 men: he was just in time to support the scattered front line formed by Serras's division against the attack which Wellington had planned. For Santocildes and the Army of Galicia had advanced against Astorga, quite without his knowledge, two days before he marched south from Oviedo.

The disposable force of the Spaniards consisted, after the weakest and least serviceable regiments had been told off for garrison duty at Corunna, Ferrol, Vigo, and other fortified places, of about 15,000 men. Santocildes brought his reserve from Lugo and the division of General Taboada, nearly 7,000 men and 600 horse, to Villafranca in the Vierzo, from which he advanced down the passes to Astorga on June 12th. A second division of 2,500 men under General Cabrera came forward at the same time from Puebla de Senabria, as far as the edge of the mountains above the Rio Tuerto, and demonstrated against La Baneza, the halfway post between Astorga and Benavente. The left wing, composed of Losada's Asturians, was wanting: it had followed Bonnet when he began to retreat and had occupied Oviedo. Losada remained there himself, but sent one brigade to join the main army by a circuitous route[1], since the direct way by the pass of Pajares and Leon was blocked by Bonnet. This brigade under Castañon did not get to the front till June 23rd.

On the 19th of June Santocildes found Astorga evacuated; the small garrison of 400 men had blown up part of the city walls, and absconded on that same morning. They fell back on Bonnet at Leon. Meanwhile Serras started to march northward from Benavente with 2,000 men, to 'contain' Santocildes, while Bonnet sent forward two regiments under his brigadier, Valletaux, to assist Serras. But their forces never met: the column

[1] I cannot discover which of the passes west of Pajares Castañon used. They are all difficult.

from Benavente got engaged with Cabrera's division near La Baneza, and could not push further forward. That from Leon found most of Taboada's division placed across its path near Benavides, behind the river Orbigo, nine miles in front of Astorga (June 23). Valletaux, despising his enemy, crossed the stream and attacked, though the balance of numbers was against him. When the engagement had been for some hours in progress, Castañon, with the brigade just arriving from Asturias, came down on his flank. The French were beaten: Valletaux fell, and his brigade lost over 300 men[1] in the combat, which the Spaniards name from the village of Cogorderos and the French from that of Quintanilla de Valle. The defeated force fell back beyond the Orbigo, and was succoured by Bonnet, with the rest of his troops from Leon. Meanwhile Serras retired towards Benavente, and called loudly for help to his chief, Bessières.

Santocildes, seeing that Cabrera had now nothing in front of him at La Baneza, called up his division to Astorga, and uniting it with the troops of Taboada and Castañon marched against Bonnet on July 2nd. The French general, after trying to defend for some time the bridge of the Orbigo, found himself so outnumbered that he must retreat towards Leon. But before he had been driven back so far, first Serras from Benavente, and then Bessières himself, with Dumoustier's division from Valladolid, came up to join him. The French, now 13,000 strong, advanced to seek a general action (July 18). Santocildes, showing great prudence, refused to fight in the plain, hastily abandoned Astorga and the banks of the Orbigo, and withdrew into the mountains south-west of Astorga, where he took post at Torienzo. The enemy did not pursue, and only a party of light cavalry entered Astorga, which it abandoned next day. For Bessières had received intelligence that his head quarters at Valladolid, which was almost ungarrisoned in the absence of Dumoustier's division, had been attacked by the *partidas* of the southern sierras (July 15). At the same time General Dorsenne

[1] The brigade (119th, 122nd Line) lost fourteen officers on June 23rd, which would argue total casualties of about 300 at the usual rate. But the Spaniards say that they took many prisoners and give the total French loss at 450.

reported from Burgos that Mina had crossed into his government, deserting his more usual haunts in Navarre, and had united with Longa and Porlier. They had a large force and had cut the communications with Santander. On returning to Valladolid with the Guard division, Bessières found waiting there on July 25 his letters of recall to Paris. The Emperor had deposed him, partly in consequence of complaints as to his intractability made by King Joseph, partly because he was dissatisfied at the hopeless tone of his dispatches, in which (to his master's discontent) he kept setting forth the thesis that the war in Spain was being conducted on a wrong system, and that the Army of the North was helpless[1]. His post was given to General Dorsenne, a man of inferior ability, though his operations prove him not to have been such a conceited imbecile as his jealous subordinate Thiébault alleges[2]. Indeed, his record in the north compares not unfavourably with that of Bessières, and he was decidedly more ready to aid his neighbours than the Duke of Istria—which was the main thing necessary among French generals in Spain.

On the departure of Bessières for Valladolid, his subordinates Bonnet and Serras had halted behind the Orbigo, holding La Baneza as their advanced point. Santocildes, who showed as much enterprise as prudence during his short tenure of command, learning that there were now only 6,000 or 7,000 men in front of him, came down again from his mountains on July 28th with all his three divisions, and advanced against them: they were forced, after some slight skirmishing, to abandon La Baneza and the line of the Orbigo, and to fall back on Leon. Santocildes advanced to the Esla, and roving detachments sent out from his front pushed forward as far into Old Castile as Sahagun and Palencia. The *partidas* got possession of the whole country-side, and the French garrisons of Zamora, Toro, Benavente, and Salamanca were completely cut off from their communication with Dorsenne's head quarters at Valladolid.

[1] See especially his dispatch to Berthier of June 6: 'On fait illusion à l'Empereur — tout le monde connaît le mode vicieux de nos opérations, &c.'—it is most free-spoken.

[2] For Thiébault's character of Dorsenne see his *Mémoires* vol. iv. pp. 401–2.

There was equal trouble in the provinces of Burgos and Santander, where Longa and Porlier long held occupied the Guard division of General Roguet, evading him when necessary, and always returning to give trouble when he had passed by.

Unfortunately for the Spaniards, Santocildes was at this moment superseded by General Abadia, whom Castaños had sent to take general command of the '6th Army'. He was in every way inferior to his junior and predecessor, being neither so alert nor so cautious, and having a craze for unnecessary innovation in matters of detail, which might have been harmless in time of peace, but was vexatious when carried out during a campaign. Wellington had at first conceived great expectations from his intelligence [1], but soon became entirely disappointed with him.

Just before Abadia replaced Santocildes, the position of Dorsenne was wonderfully improved by the arrival on the Ebro of the division of Souham, 7,000 strong, which had been promised to him in June, and had been marching up from Marseilles for five weeks. The commander of the Army of the North at once turned over the province of Burgos to Souham, and moved forward from it the greater part of the Guard division of Roguet, which thus became free for operations in the open field. Caffarelli's and Reille's divisions were now also present in Biscay and Navarre, so that the available strength of the French in northern Spain was higher than it had been since the summer of 1810, and Dorsenne thought that his rear was adequately covered. He therefore marched with the two divisions of the Young Guard and his two cavalry brigades, to link his operations with those of Bonnet on the Esla. Dorsenne started from Valladolid on August 9th, marching in two columns, Dumoustier's division by Mayorga and Valencia de Don Juan, Roguet's by Villalpando and Benavente, so as to converge on La Baneza. Bonnet, strengthened by some reinforcements, advanced at the same time from Leon against the bridges of the Orbigo and Astorga, and Dorsenne, with a small reserve, followed by the road Valladolid–Valderas. It was evidently intended that Roguet's division should turn the Spanish right, and drive the

[1] See *Dispatches*, vii. p. 648, for an account of Abadia's good intentions, and viii. p. 128, for Wellington's disappointment at their non-fulfilment.

whole army northward, and away from Galicia, while it was attacked in front by Bonnet and Dumoustier.

Fortunately for his army, which was now about to be attacked by nearly 30,000 men, Abadia listened to the advice of Santocildes, and withdrew hastily to the hills when, on August 17th, his outposts were attacked. Cabrera's division retired on its old post of Puebla de Senabria, and got into communication with Silveira's Portuguese, who had come up to Braganza. Castañon and the Conde de Belveder[1] (who had just relieved Taboada in command of the 2nd Division) were drawn back to the two passes above Astorga, those of Manzanal and Fuencebadon. Dorsenne, dividing his troops, attacked both, and carried them, not without severe fighting, on July 27th. The Spanish detachment in the Manzanal pass was badly cut up: that before Fuencebadon suffered less. The French lost General Corsin. Behind the passes there are two lines of retreat into Galicia, the northern and more obvious is the great *chaussée* to Corunna, via Villafranca and Lugo, which Sir John Moore followed in January 1809. The southern and more rugged is that by Ponferrada, Domingo Flores, and the Val de Orres to Orense, which La Romaña took in that same historic retreat. This last road was now chosen by Abadia, for two reasons: the first was that by taking it he placed himself upon the flank of Dorsenne's advance against the heart of Galicia, and forced the enemy either to turn against him, and follow him into a remote and desolate country, or (if he pressed on) to expose his communication with Astorga and Leon. The second reason was that he knew that Dorsenne had come lightly equipped, intending rather to drive his army out of the Astorga region than to conquer the whole province of Galicia; the French would not, therefore, be able to feed on the desolate route between Ponferrada and Orense, and would probably turn back, content with having cleared the plains of Leon.

This argument was correct. Dorsenne went no further on the great *chaussée* than Villafranca, which he sacked on August 29th, and then turned on his heel, refusing to press deeper into Galicia, or to pursue Abadia's army. He marched back to

[1] Our old acquaintance of Gamonal and Tamames.

Astorga on the 30th–31st, burning every village of the Vierzo on his way, and descended into the plains of Leon. Abadia followed cautiously, reoccupied Villafranca and Ponferrada, and pushed his outposts forward again to the edge of the mountains. It was found that the French were repairing Astorga, which they once more garrisoned, and held as an outpost till the next year. The ground occupied by the Army of Galicia was exactly the same on the 10th of September as it had been on the 10th of June, save that all Asturias was still clear of invaders. It was not till the late autumn that Bonnet once more made his appearance in that oft-invaded province.

The reasons of Dorsenne's sudden retreat from the borders of Galicia were many and various. It must not be supposed that his expedition had been taken in hand with the object of conquering that province, as Napier seems to suggest[1]. Such a task would have required much longer preparation than he had been able to make: he had neither collected the stores and munitions that would have been required for so great an enterprise, nor made the necessary dispositions for the protection of the vast space behind him. When he marched against Abadia, he left nothing between the Ebro and the border of Portugal save Souham's newly arrived division and a few of Serras's battalions scattered in small garrisons at Leon, Benavente, Valladolid, &c. His movement of advance had been made to chase the Army of Galicia out of the plains, where it had been showing itself so persistently since June, and to relieve the pressure which it had brought upon Bonnet and Serras. There was no purpose of conquest underlying his march, only a desire to scour the valleys of the Orbigo and the Esla of tiresome intruders. The Spaniards were wholly mistaken in supposing that he retired from Villafranca because Abadia had shown a disposition to make a long resistance, or because the Junta had called out the *alarmas*, or general *levée en masse* of the province, raised on the principle of the Portuguese Ordenança. He could have gone on further if that had been his intention—but he had no such desire.

[1] 'Galicia was helpless, and Dorsenne would have taken Coruña and Ferrol if the arrival of Wellington on the Coa had not alarmed him,' iii. p. 330. This statement shows a misconception of the situation.

Not only were his munitions exhausted, but all the news behind him was unsatisfactory. Though the reinforcements from France had arrived on the Ebro, Old Castile was in the most disturbed condition. There had been a notable disaster at Santander on August 14th–15th, when Porlier, by a sudden concentration, had stormed the town, dispersing General Rouget's[1] garrison, and had then swept away most of the minor posts around it; only Torrelavega had succeeded in beating off his assault. But when reinforcements came flocking in, the Spaniards had retired to the hills with 300 prisoners, and were threatening other points. The gates of Palencia and Valladolid had been insulted by *partidas*, who showed themselves boldly in sight of the walls, and established a loose blockade, which could only be pierced by the movement of considerable columns. But the most pressing point was Ciudad Rodrigo: Julian Sanchez had cut its communications with Salamanca, and had defeated small bodies of 300 or 400 men which had been sent to reopen them. A much larger force had to be detailed to throw provisions into the place in July, but by the end of August stores were again running low, and General Reynaud, the governor, whenever he could pass an emissary through the lines of the *partidas*, kept asking for help of all kinds.

But since Dorsenne started for his expedition against Astorga, the problem of getting food into Rodrigo had been complicated by the appearance of Wellington's army on the Coa and the Agueda. On August 12th the head quarters of the Anglo-Portuguese army had been moved up from the south to Fuente Guinaldo, in the immediate neighbourhood of the blockaded fortress, and already on August 8th the garrison had detected British outposts—from the Light Division—in their immediate neighbourhood. Now, since Marmont and the Army of Portugal were still in the valley of the Tagus, and all Leon was still in the charge of the Army of the North, Dorsenne found himself responsible for the revictualling, indeed for the relief from blockade, of a fortress which might be beset by 40,000 men. It was absolutely necessary for him to return from the border of

[1] This general is not to be confused with Roguet, the Guard commander, though they were operating in regions close to each other, and often get mixed in contemporary narratives.

Galicia, and to concert matters with Marmont for a common movement against Wellington. For the field force of the Army of the North, which had just driven Abadia into the hills, was not over 28,000 strong, and obviously could not succour Rodrigo by its own unaided strength.

Returning to Valladolid early in September, with the two Guard divisions, and leaving Bonnet once more to observe the Galicians, Dorsenne opened *pourparlers* with Marmont for a general concentration against Wellington. Of this effort we must speak in its due place.

Meanwhile matters settled down in the northern field of operations. Bonnet was too weak to move, or to think of reoccupying his old post in the Asturias. Abadia's army was much reduced in numbers, both by privations and by desertion: the last days of the late campaign, spent in the desolate Val de Orres, had been particularly trying to the troops. An English observer who saw them at Ponferrada described them as 'in even worse condition than might be expected—half the soldiers without trousers, and wearing only capotes—while the clothing of the rest shows great need for improvement. They are a fine body of men, standing well, though deeply marked by privation, and as badly trained as equipped. The best corps can only manœuvre singly, not attempting movements of the line; the Toledo battalion broke down in attempting to change front *en échelon*. The cavalry are on a level with the infantry, move with wide gaps between squadrons, and cannot go accurately through the sword exercise. The horses might each be a Rosinante—the artillery as badly manned as horsed[1].' The numbers were terribly low: it was doubtful whether the whole field force could produce 10,000 men, and they had started on the June campaign with 15,000.

Dilapidated, however, as the Army of Galicia might be at the end of its operations, it had done well, having kept the French Army of the North 'contained' for the many weeks during which Wellington was absent on the Guadiana. Bessières and Dorsenne had accomplished nothing positive during that time; and the territory held down by the invaders in September

[1] From the *Memoirs of Sir Howard Douglas*, British commissioner with Abadia's army, pp. 122–3.

was less than it had been in June by the whole extent of the Asturias. It is absurd of Napier to state that 'Galicia with its lordly Junta, its regular army, fortified towns, numerous population, and constant supplies from England, had less weight in the contest than the 5,000 Portuguese militia conducted by Trant and Wilson[1].' The province, so far from being of no weight in the contest, did Wellington most useful service. The two diversions carried out by Santocildes, which twice compelled the Army of the North to mass all its available field troops on the Orbigo, were operations of the most profitable sort, and since the Galician always retired in time, led to no disasters of the kind that too often happened when a Peninsular general was overdaring. But while paying his just due to Santocildes, we must praise even more the unwearied activity of the chiefs of the Cantabrian bands and the guerrilleros of Old Castile and Leon. It was Longa and Porlier, and Julian Sanchez, who, with forces that were never very great in numbers, paralysed by their ubiquity and their unceasing enterprise the greater part of Bessières's and Dorsenne's troops. If they had not been in existence, the French might have found men enough to conquer Galicia, or to attack north-eastern Portugal in force. This was true throughout the whole of 1810 and 1811, and was a governing fact in the history of the Peninsular War. Even though the Emperor pushed 30,000 fresh infantry (the divisions of Souham, Reille, and Caffarelli) into northern Spain in July and August 1811, he was never able to make the communication between Bayonne and Madrid absolutely safe, or to call any region subdued which was not held down by a garrison altogether out of proportion to its population.

[1] *History of the Peninsular War*, iii. p. 186.

SECTION XXVII: CHAPTER IV

SOULT'S TROUBLES IN ANDALUSIA. JULY–SEPTEMBER 1811

After his departure from the Guadiana on June 28th, Soult found himself plunged into a new series of troubles, which were to continue all through the summer and autumn. Just as he was about to set out for Seville with two cavalry regiments as escort, following in the wake of Godinot's and Conroux's infantry, he received the unwelcome news that Blake, of whose march he had been aware since the 24th, had crossed the lower Guadiana near Mertola on June 23[1], and had invaded the Condado de Niebla with nearly 12,000 men. If Blake had struck straight at Seville there can be little doubt that he would have taken it, for General Daricau, the governor, hastened, on the first news of the approach of an enemy, to shut himself up in the fortified Cartuja Convent, with his scanty garrison of convalescents, drafts, and *Juramentados*. He had not the least hope of maintaining the large and turbulent city under control. But no one appeared to molest him, except some cavalry, who were easily driven off by cannon-shot. Blake, apparently disliking to present himself in the open plain of the Guadalquiver, had not marched on Seville, but sat down on June 30 to besiege the castle of Niebla, the capital of the region which he had invaded. It was the only French garrison left in western Andalusia, and was held by a battalion of 600 'Swiss' in King Joseph's service—a miscellaneous corps formed of deserters of all races from the Spanish and British armies, under a Colonel Fritzhardt. Blake lay for five days before the mediaeval castle with the division of Zayas, while Ballasteros, with the rest of the army, took a position to cover him against French troops coming

[1] His troops had plundered the Portuguese peasantry freely during their rapid march, and actually came to skirmishing with the local Ordenança. For anecdotes by an eye-witness, Schepeler, see his book, i. p. 304.

from Estremadura, who (as was rightly suspected) were not long in appearing. The siege failed because Blake had brought no artillery with him—on account of the bad mountain roads he had sent his guns round from Mertola by Ayamonte, and they had not come up. An attempt to take the castle by escalade failed, and the Spanish general was sitting helplessly before its walls on July 2nd, when the news came that the French were upon him. Soult, hearing on his way southward of Blake's raid, had turned both Conroux and Godinot against the invaders, and had continued his own route to Seville with no more than the cavalry and one infantry regiment. While Godinot marched on Niebla by Cala and Araçena, Conroux tried to cut in between Blake and the sea by a circuitous route by Fregenal, through the worst of the mountains, aiming at the ports of Huelva and Moguer. It was hoped that the Spaniards might be caught between the two divisions—but the quarry was too shy. Blake departed at the first alarm, and embarked at Ayamonte with Zayas's division; Ballasteros, marching away into the hills which he knew so well, evaded Conroux, and passed for a time northward into the Sierra de Aroche. The cavalry under Penne Villemur did not abscond by water, but returned along the Portuguese frontier to Estremadura, where it joined the skeleton army of Castaños, which still consisted of no more than six or eight battalions under Morillo and Carlos de España, some 3,000 or 4,000 men at most. Wellington had sent it back to Villa Viçosa during the operations around the Caya, declining to use it in the fighting-line till it should be reorganized. Blake, whose embarkation at Ayamonte on July 8th had been accompanied by circumstances of disgraceful panic[1], returned to Cadiz with 7,000 men. Ballasteros followed him thither six weeks later, having descended from the hills and embarked at the mouth of the Guadiana at the end of August.

Blake's Niebla expedition had been conducted with the greatest timidity and incompetence. Yet it had served Welling-

[1] For which see Schepeler, p. 307. On a false alarm the troops began to embark on the transports without orders, and in great disarray. Blake, according to Schepeler, made a ridiculous spectacle of himself, by wading a long way through shallow water to get out to a small boat. There were no French within many miles.

ton's purpose much as he had intended, since it drew off 11,000 French troops into a remote corner of Andalusia for some weeks. It is true that Soult's original withdrawal from the Guadiana was not caused by this diversion, but it had forced him to send away on a wild-goose chase troops urgently needed elsewhere. For if Conroux and Godinot had not marched to Niebla and Ayamonte, they would have gone straight to Granada, to reinforce the 4th Corps, which was, throughout the month of July, in considerable danger from the Murcians. It was not till August had begun that Soult was able to come to its aid, with the divisions which had been distracted to the far west by Blake's expedition.

Of Freire's Army of Murcia we have heard nothing since the unhappy rout of Baza (November 3, 1810). After that shock it had kept quiet for many a day, and only dared to move when, in April 1811, Soult began to make heavy requisitions on the 4th Corps, in order to form the army that marched for Albuera. Further drafts had been called westward in the end of May, so that Leval, who succeeded Sebastiani as commander of the corps about this time, was left with numbers quite inadequate to hold down the broad kingdoms of Jaen and Granada. This, of course, gave Freire the chance of accomplishing something useful: and, leaving the frontiers of Murcia, he began to press forward against the French posts. He had at this time a force of three infantry divisions, under La Cuadra, Sanz, and Creagh, and two weak cavalry divisions under Osorio and Ladrón. The whole amounted, after making deductions for the garrison of Cartagena (2,000 men) to nearly 12,000 bayonets and 1,500 sabres[1]. In May Freire began to push forward cautiously, with his cavalry and two divisions on the high-road Lorca–Baza–Granada, and a smaller force, consisting of La Cuadra's division, on the side road which leads, by Huescar and Pozoalcon, to the valley of the upper Guadalquivir and the kingdom of Jaen. His progress was so slow that the French were able to withdraw at their leisure before him, without any loss. Leval was so weak that he made no attempt to stand, and evacuated in succession the coast lands about Almeria, as far as Motril, the highlands east

[1] See table of the Army of Murcia (3rd Army) on June 1st, in Appendix XVII.

of Granada, including the towns of Baza and Guadix, and the upper valley of the Guadalquivir. La Cuadra's advanced posts penetrated as far as Ubeda, and bickered with the garrisons of Baeza, Linares, and Jaen. Officers sent out from the main column raised the mountaineers of the Sierra Nevada, and bands of insurgents began to cut the communications between Granada and Malaga. At the head of these irregulars was the turbulent Conde de Montijo, of whom we last heard when he got into trouble for conspiring against the supreme Junta[1]. He is now found more usefully employed, giving trouble to the enemy instead of to his own Government.

Cautious though Freire had been, his advance had shaken the hold of the 4th Corps on eastern Andalusia. Leval reported to Soult that, with the 3,000 or 4,000 troops whom he had concentrated at Granada, he was quite helpless, and was wellnigh blockaded on every side. It was only with difficulty that he could keep in touch with the Polish division, which lay in and about Malaga, or with the garrisons of Jaen and Cordova on the other side. He could only collect a force sufficient to attack Freire by abandoning all his outlying posts, and permission to do so had not been granted him. He must be reinforced, or allowed to concentrate his scattered troops and strike at the enemy's main body.

A few days later the state of affairs in eastern Andalusia became still more threatening. Blake, after embarking at Ayamonte on July 8th, had two days later returned to Cadiz with the two Albuera divisions of Zayas and Lardizabal. He stayed only a fortnight in the island city, and got leave from the Regency to join the Army of Murcia. In order that he might dispose of all the forces in that direction, he asked and obtained the control of the Valencian army also, and was made Captain-General of that province as well as of Murcia and Aragon. Blake landed at Almeria on July 31st with the same troops that he had brought back from the west—about 7,000 foot and 500 horse. From thence he led them to join Freire's army near Baza, and left them there, while he himself (taking Zayas and some other officers with him) made a hasty visit to Valencia, to receive

[1] See vol. iii. pp. 4 and 104.

over the command from the Marquis del Palacio[1], and to see what measures were necessary with regard to the threatening movements of Suchet on the side of Aragon.

The two divisions under Lardizabal and Joseph O'Donnell (vice Zayas) had joined Freire on August 3rd, and a force of 15,000 infantry and nearly 2,000 horse was thus concentrated near Baza. But Freire, being now only the interim commander, refused to take any responsibility, and remained apathetically watching the small French force in Granada, which was (for the moment) absolutely at his mercy. He posted the army in a very strong position near Gor, twelve miles in front of Baza and forty miles from Granada. It was covered in front by the ravine of one of the tributaries of the Guardal river, and could only be turned on the flanks by a very wide movement in difficult ground. La Cuadra's division remained at Pozoalcon, some thirty miles away from the main body, observing the kingdom of Jaen and vexing its garrisons by small incursions.

Soult had returned to Seville after the expulsion of Blake from western Andalusia, but with no intention of staying there for long, since it was clearly necessary to re-establish the lost prestige of the French arms on the side of Granada, and to reoccupy the ground which Leval had been forced to give up. But he had judged that there was no desperate hurry, since Freire had shown himself such a sluggish adversary: and though he had already directed Godinot's provisional division to march on Jaen in the last days of July, he himself was still at Seville when he received the unexpected news of Blake's disembarkation at Almeria on the 31st of that month. Since the Army of Murcia was thus reinforced, the danger to Leval at Granada had become imminent, and it was clearly necessary to rescue him at once. Accordingly the Marshal, setting out from Seville on August 3rd with four regiments of Latour-Maubourg's cavalry and part of Conroux's infantry division[2], arrived at Granada by forced marches on the 7th. Godinot was at the same time directed to

[1] The Marquis had only taken over charge of Valencia from Charles O'Donnell a few weeks before.

[2] This provisional division of 9th Corps troops (see p. 445) had already sent off some of its battalions to join Victor before Cadiz, since the units belonged to the 1st Corps.

move from Jaen and Baeza against La Cuadra, to drive him off from Pozoalcon, and then to fall upon the flank and rear of Freire's strong position near Baza.

Nothing could have served Soult better than the chance that the army against which he was marching was destitute for the moment of its new Commander-in-Chief, and left in charge of a substitute who shirked responsibility. From August 3rd, when the Albuera divisions joined Freire, down to the 7th, when the reinforcements reached Granada, the small French force in that city had been in a most dangerous position. But nothing whatever had happened during the critical days: the Spaniards had remained quiescent behind the ravine of Gor. Picking up the small part of the garrison of Granada that could be spared to join his field force, Soult marched against the enemy on the 8th of August, and was in front of their position on the 9th, with 6,000 infantry and 1,500 horse. Seeing the enormous strength of the ground, he contented himself with making noisy artillery demonstrations against Freire's line, and waited for the arrival of Godinot, who with 4,000 bayonets and 600 sabres was due to appear in the rear of the Murcians on the 10th, if all had gone well with him.

As a matter of fact Godinot had marched against La Cuadra on the 7th from Baeza, by the way of Jodar. The Spanish general, who was outnumbered, abandoned his post at Pozoalcon on the 8th and fell back towards Huescar, nearer the frontier of Murcia, without fighting. Godinot, therefore, found nothing to prevent him from falling on the rear of the main hostile force, and marched on Baza. His approach was reported to Freire, who detached against him Joseph O'Donnell's division of 4,000 men, and ordered La Cuadra to hasten to its aid, and to join in covering the flank of the army. O'Donnell took post at the fords of the Guardal river, in front of Zujar, and stood on the defensive, hoping to be joined by La Cuadra during the course of the day. The latter, however, had gone off too far to the east for it to be possible for him to return in time, and O'Donnell was badly beaten by Godinot on the afternoon of the 9th, and lost a third of his men—423 killed and wounded, and 1,000 dispersed or prisoners.

By continuing his march for another eight miles, after beating

O'Donnell, Godinot might have seized Baza and cut off Freire from his retreat on Murcia. But his men were tired, and it was reported to him that a new Spanish force—La Cuadra, coming up over late in the day—was approaching. Wherefore he halted, and only sent out cavalry to search for Soult's flank, and to reconnoitre Baza. But Freire, on hearing that O'Donnell was crushed, and his own rear threatened, silently evacuated his strong position in the night, and marched through Baza and across Godinot's front with all his host. He got away, but Soult, detecting his retreat at dawn, bade Latour-Maubourg pursue him with all speed at the head of his horsemen. The Spanish rearguard was caught up at Las Vertientes, ten miles beyond Baza. Freire ordered his cavalry, under Osorio and Loy, to face about and protect the march of the infantry. But a charge of Pierre Soult, who led the French advance brigade, broke the Spanish horse, who fled in all directions, uncovering the infantry. The latter took to the hills—one column consisting of the divisions of Sanz and O'Donnell went off southward, and escaped without much loss by Oria and Albox. The other, containing the divisions of Creagh and Lardizabal, turned north, plunged into the Murcian hills, and made its way by Maria to Caravaca. La Cuadra, making a separate retreat in a parallel direction, also arrived at the last-named place[1]. Such was their haste that one column made thirty-six miles in the day on the 10th, the other twenty-seven. Stragglers were many.

The Murcian army was thus divided into two masses, neither of which covered the main road to the capital of the province, and Soult, standing triumphant at Velez Rubio with his 12,000 men united, might have marched on Murcia had he chosen. But the way was long—some seventy miles—and the intervening country rough and thinly peopled. The Marshal resolved not to pursue Freire, but to devote himself to the hunting down of the insurgents of Granada and the southern mountains, while the main hostile army was out of action. When, therefore, Blake returned from Valencia to pay a hasty visit to his

[1] There is a good account of this obscure campaign by Schepeler, an eye-witness, in his *Spanische Monarchie*, pp. 558-62, and a longer one in Arteche, vol. x.

scattered army, he found it shaken in morale, and weaker by 4,000 men than when he had left it, but not destroyed. Of the two disjointed sections, one descended in haste from the northern mountains, the other came in marching parallel with the coast; they met at Alcantarilla in front of the city of Murcia, on August 14th, and began to fortify a position there. But the French had turned back; Soult contented himself with reoccupying Baza with a permanent garrison, and did not cross the Murcian frontier. Hence Blake was able, a few weeks later, to take off to the north not only his own two divisions, but part of Freire's troops, for service against Suchet on the side of Valencia. It was a lucky chance for him that the invasion of Valencia from the side of Aragon only began upon September 16, more than a month after Soult had returned into Andalusia. If it had come earlier, there would have been no succours available for the oft-defeated and never very efficient '2nd Army', as the Valencian corps was now called.

Soult had not gone in person further than Velez Rubio, though his light cavalry had pursued the flying Spaniards many miles further, as far as the pass of Lumbreras. On August 14th he turned back[1], and broke up his army into several columns, who were to hunt down the insurgents of the Sierra Nevada and the Alpujarras. The main body returned to Granada, a flanking column occupied Almeria, another swept the valley of the upper Guadalquivir. There was much plunder and a good deal of reckless shooting of inhabitants—for the French were exasperated at the rising which had taken place in districts that had seemed for the last eighteen months to be pacified. But the crushing of the insurgents turned out to be a long business—indeed eastern and southern Andalusia were never so thoroughly under Soult's control as they had been in 1810 and the early months of 1811. The Count of Montijo lurked persistently in

[1] Schepeler (p. 460) mentions that during his short halt on the frontier of Murcia, Soult court-martialled and shot a French *émigré* officer in the Spanish service captured on the 9th—Charles Cléry, the son of the faithful servant of Louis XVI, who was so long with his master in the Temple prison. As he had been out of France for many years, first in the Austrian and then in the Spanish army, this was a cruel stretch of the idea of treason.

the mountains, and gained several small successes over General Godinot, who was in main charge of the hunt. On August 21st he captured two whole companies of Poles near Motril, and a few days later checked a column of 1,500 men under Colonel Remond. He himself ultimately got off to join the Murcian army, but the local guerrilleros continued the strife, which was to blaze up again into a formidable conflagration when a new Spanish regular force came upon the scene. This was the division of Ballasteros, who, as has been already mentioned, abandoned his old haunts by the Rio Tinto and the lower Guadiana, to land on September 4th at Algesiras with 3,000 men. Calling in the serranos of the Ronda mountains to his aid, he captured many small places, and forced Soult to turn Godinot's troops against him. Thus the insurgents further east got a momentary respite, and Soult's unending troubles took a new turn. But the autumn and winter warfare in the extreme south of Andalusia must be narrated in another place. Suffice it to say here that Soult was never in the later months of 1811 so free from trouble as to find it easy to send any serious aid to Drouet and the 5th Corps, whose duty it was to check and contain Hill's Anglo-Portuguese divisions in Estremadura.

SECTION XXVIII

OPERATIONS IN EASTERN SPAIN DURING THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1811

CHAPTER I

FIGUERAS AND TARRAGONA

In the earlier chapter of this volume, which took the affairs of Catalonia and Aragon down to the month of March, we left Suchet making vigorous preparation for the siege of Tarragona, within whose walls his master had promised him that he should 'find his marshal's baton.' While munitions and food for this great enterprise were being collected, the unemployed troops of the Army of Aragon were occupied in scouring the mountains on the side of New Castile and Valencia, always driving the *partidas* before them, but never able to bring about their capture or destruction. Meanwhile, Macdonald with the active part of the French Army of Catalonia, about 17,000 strong, lay in and about Lerida, 'containing' the main Spanish force, which had now passed under the control of the new Captain-General, the active but incapable Campoverde. Based on Tarragona, and with his divisions spread out in front of it, this officer bickered with Macdonald continually, but had achieved nothing substantial since his subordinate Sarsfield cut up Eugenio's Italians at the combat of Valls, long weeks before[1]. His ambitious attempt to surprise Barcelona had failed with loss on March 19th, because it was based on supposed treachery within the walls, which did not really exist. Further to the north, in the Ampudam and on the Pyrenean frontier, Baraguay d'Hilliers with the rest of the 7th Corps, some 18,000 men, had to furnish the garrisons of Rosas, Figueras, Gerona and other smaller places, and to contend with the miqueletes of Manso, Rovira, Martinez,

[1] See above, page 243.

and other chiefs. There were practically no Spanish regular troops in this direction, almost the whole of the old regiments having been withdrawn southward to face Macdonald, and to defend Tarragona and the surrounding region of central Catalonia. Nevertheless Baraguay d'Hilliers, as we shall see, had no small task thrown upon his hands. In this province the irregulars were at their best, having in the miquelete system an organization which made them far more formidable than the *partidas* of central or northern Spain.

On March 10th Napoleon, who had marked with approval all Suchet's earlier operations, while he was thoroughly dissatisfied with Macdonald, resolved to cut up the old 7th Corps or Army of Catalonia, by making over nearly half of its force to the Army of Aragon. A decree declared that the three provinces of Lerida, Tarragona, and Tortosa were transferred to the charge of Suchet, with so much of the province of Barcelona as lay east of the pass of Ordal and the course of the upper Llobregat. Along with the provinces went the troops stationed in them, viz. the French division of Frère, the Italian division of Pino, and the Neapolitan division now commanded by Compère, together with the cavalry and artillery attached to them. Macdonald's charge was cut down to the region of Barcelona and the lands north of it. The 7th Corps, or troops of his command, sank from over 40,000 to about 25,000 men. The 3rd Corps rose from 26,000 to 43,000 men. With this augmented force Suchet was told both to hold down his old realm in Aragon, and to take Tarragona, furnishing not only a siege army but a covering force as well. Macdonald was no longer to be the shield of Suchet's operations, as during the siege of Tortosa, but was to occupy himself on a separate and minor system of operations—the Imperial orders directed him to occupy Cardona, Berga, and Urgel, the centres of resistance in upper Catalonia, and to take the rocky stronghold of Montserrat.

Meanwhile, it was necessary to transfer Macdonald's own person from Lerida, where lay the troops that he had to surrender, to Barcelona, which was to be for the future the centre of his activity. So dangerous was the passage that he had to be given an escort of no less than 7,000 infantry and 700 horse. Taking the way of Manresa, he started from Lerida on March 30th

and cut his way through the Spanish forces which stretched across his path. The regular division of Sarsfield, supported by the *somatenes* of central Catalonia, gave him much trouble: though they failed to hold Manresa, which the French stormed and wantonly burnt, they hung on to the flanks of the marching column, repeatedly attacked its rearguard, and cut off or slew in three days of continuous fighting some 600 men. After reaching the Llobregat at Sabadel, Macdonald went on to the neighbouring Barcelona, while his escort fought its way back to Lerida by the road of Igualada, and joined Suchet on April 9th.

Having now got the whole of his new army under his own hand, Suchet was able to prepare all his arrangements for the march on Tarragona. Ample provision had first to be made for the defence of Aragon in his rear, where the enemies were numerous if not powerful—Mina on the side of Navarre, Villa Campa and Carbajal in the mountains of the south, and the Army of Valencia beyond the lower course of the Ebro. He set aside three battalions and a cavalry regiment to watch Mina [1], and two battalions each for garrisons at Saragossa and Calatayud [2]; he placed a brigade under Paris at Daroca [3], and another under Abbé at Teruel [4] to watch the southern insurgents. To keep off the Valencians he left a regiment at Morella and Alcañiz [5], another in garrison at Tortosa [6], and 1,600 men disposed in small forts along the lower Ebro from La Rapita at its mouth to Caspe [7]. Musnier was given charge of all the troops on the right bank of the Ebro, and had orders to unite Abbé's and Paris's brigades and evacuate the southern hill-country if the Valencians made a serious advance against Tortosa.

[1] One battalion each of the 44th and 115th Ligne and 1st of the Vistula, and the Italian *Dragons de Napoléon*.

[2] At Saragossa one battalion each of the 5th Léger and 117th Ligne; at Calatayud two battalions of 14th Ligne.

[3] Two battalions of the 44th, two of the 2nd of the Vistula.

[4] Three battalions of the 114th and two of the 121st, with two squadrons of cuirassiers.

[5] Two battalions of the 115th Ligne.

[6] Two battalions of the 121st Ligne.

[7] One battalion of the 115th, one of the 3rd of the Vistula, and apparently some of the Neapolitans.

This left Suchet twenty-nine battalions for the expeditionary corps with which he was about to march against Tarragona—of which nineteen were French, two Polish, and eight Italian. They amounted to just under 15,000 bayonets. Since the three divisions of the Army of Aragon had all been thinned down by the numerous detachments left behind, he amalgamated what remained of them with the French and the Italian brigades left to him by Macdonald, to make up three provisional divisions for the field, under Habert, Harispe, and Frère. The first had one French and two Italian brigades (fourteen battalions), the others two brigades each (six and nine battalions respectively). There was a cavalry brigade of 1,400 men under Boussard, and a large provision of artillery and engineers for the siege (2,000 men of the former, 750 of the latter arm). Counting the auxiliary services the army had about 20,000 men—no great figure for the task before it, for Tarragona was strong and Campoverde had some 12,000 or 15,000 regular troops at his disposition—the three divisions of Sarsfield, Eroles, and Courten —besides such aid as the miqueletes might give. And this last resource was not to be despised; though they were not always forthcoming when they were most required, yet they were not usually found wanting. They could never be caught, owing to their knowledge of their own hills, and they were never discouraged.

It was arranged that the army should march on Tarragona by two separate routes; while the divisions of Frère and Harispe started from Lerida by the road of Momblanch, the third division, that of Habert, was to move from a separate base—Tortosa, where had been collected the heavy artillery and the munitions of the siege. The guns which had taken Tortosa were still lying there, with all the artillery reserve, and it was to escort them that Habert was detailed to take the southern route along the sea-coast by the Col de Balaguer. From this direction too were to come the provisions of the army, which had been brought down by water from Saragossa and Mequinenza, while the Ebro was in flood, and deposited at Mora—the nearest point on the river to Tarragona. This division of forces was perhaps necessary, but appeared dangerous; if Campoverde, when the French commenced their movements, had thrown himself

with all disposable forces upon the weak division of Habert—only six battalions—and had wrecked the battering-train, there could have been no siege of Tarragona for many a month to come.

But before the two columns had started from Lerida and Tortosa, and while part of Harispe's division was out on a final cattle-hunt up the valley of the Noguera, before the Commander-in-Chief had even come up to the front to join his army, a message arrived from the north which might well have stopped the whole expedition. On April 21st Suchet, still at Saragossa, received the astounding news that the Spaniards had captured Figueras, the bulwark of northern Catalonia, and the most important place (with the exception of Barcelona) which belonged to the French in the whole principality. The disaster had happened on the night of the 9th–10th, and the news of it had been brought by a spy paid by Macdonald, across the territory occupied by the Spanish army: otherwise it would have taken still longer to travel, by the circuitous route through France, which was the only way by which news from Upper Catalonia could reach Aragon [1]. Macdonald and Maurice Mathieu, the governor of Barcelona, who added his supplications to those of the Marshal, begged Suchet to abandon for the moment the projected siege of Tarragona, and to march to their aid with every man that he could spare. For they must collect as large a force as possible to recover Figueras, and a field army could not be got together from the much-reduced 7th Corps, which had to find a garrison of 6,000 men for Barcelona, and similar, if smaller, detachments for Gerona, Rosas, Hostalrich, Mont Louis, Palamos, and other smaller places. If Campoverde should march northward, with the bulk of his regular divisions, to succour Figueras, there would be little or nothing to oppose to him.

Suchet weighed the petition of his colleague with care, but refused to assent to it. His decision was highly approved by the Emperor when he came to know of it, and the reasons which he

[1] Down to this winter Suchet could only communicate with France up the Ebro and sent messengers via Tudela and Pampeluna, but he had just opened a somewhat shorter route for himself via Jaca and Oleron, which saved three days. Even so, communications were intolerably slow. See Suchet's *Mémoires*, ii. p. 9.

gave for his answer seem convincing. It would take, as he calculated, twenty-five days to move a division, or a couple of divisions, from Lerida to Figueras across the hostile country-side of Catalonia; and since the disaster was already eleven days old when the news came to hand, there must be over a month of delay between the moment when the Spaniards had taken the fortress and that at which the Army of Aragon could intervene. In that month the fate of affairs in the Ampurdam would have been already decided. The succours for the garrison of northern Catalonia must come from France, not from Aragon. Figueras lies only twenty miles from the French frontier [1], and Baraguay d'Hilliers could be helped far more readily from Perpignan, Toulouse, or Narbonne than from Lerida. National Guards and dépôt troops could be hurried to his aid in a few days. As to Campoverde, he would be called home at once by a blow delivered against Tarragona, his capital and chief arsenal. He must infallibly hurry back to defend it, at the head of his field army, and Macdonald and Baraguay d'Hilliers would then have nothing but the miqueletes opposed to them. If the 7th Corps, with the reinforcements from France which it must infallibly receive, could not deal with Rovira, Manso and the rest, it was time to abandon the Peninsular War! The crisis, whichever way its results might lean, was bound to have come and passed before the Army of Aragon could be of any use. It would almost certainly have ended in a check for the Spaniards, since the Emperor could pour as many men into the Ampurdam as he pleased. At the worst Figueras would be beleaguered so soon as the reinforcements arrived from France, and all the best of the Spaniards in northern Catalonia would be shut up in the place and kept out of mischief. It was entirely to the advantage of the Imperial arms that the enemy should lock up his men in garrisons, for they were much more troublesome when acting as partisans in the mountains [2].

Accordingly, on April 24th, Suchet, having sent a direct refusal to Macdonald's petition, came up to Lerida, and on the 28th

[1] As Suchet remarks (ii. p. 17) the Emperor at Paris could have the news of the fall of Figueras on April 15th or 16th, while he himself only got it on April 21st.

[2] For all these arguments and others see Suchet's *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 5–18.

Harispe's and Frère's divisions started off for Tarragona by the shortest road, that through Momblanch. At the same time Habert with the siege artillery moved out from Tortosa for the same destination along the coast-road by the Col de Balaguer and Cambrils. On May 2 both columns were near Tarragona, having met with very little opposition by the way, for Campoverde, with the larger part of his field army, had gone off a fortnight before to the north, with the intention of succouring Figueras, and the rest of his regulars had retired into Tarragona to form its garrison.

Before dealing with the long and bitterly contested struggle at Tarragona, it is necessary to explain how Figueras had come into the hands of the Spaniards. This place was a new and well-designed eighteenth-century fortress, built sixty years back by Ferdinand VI, to supplement the defences of the Catalonian frontier. Thus it had not the weaknesses of old-fashioned strongholds like Gerona or Lerida, where the scheme of the fortifications dated back to the Middle Ages. Close to the high-road from Perpignan to Barcelona, and only twenty miles from the frontier, stands an isolated hill with a flat top, at whose foot lay the original village or small town of Figueras. Ferdinand VI had fortified this hilltop so as to form a circular bastioned enceinte, and thus created a most formidable citadel, which he named after himself San Fernando. It dominated the little town below, and the whole of the surrounding plain of the Ampurdam. The slopes below the wall are steep, even precipitous in some places, and there is only one road leading up into the place by curves and zigzags, though there are several posterns at other points. San Fernando had been one of the fortresses which Napoleon seized by treachery in 1808—a French detachment, ostensibly marching through the town towards Barcelona, had fallen upon and evicted the Spanish garrison [1]. Since then it had formed the most important base for operations in northern Catalonia, and had been the magazine from which the sieges of Rosas and Gerona had been fed. A long possession of three years had made the Imperial generals careless, and the garrison had gradually dwindled down to a provisional battalion of 600 or 700 men, mainly composed at this moment of drafts for the Italian and

[1] See vol. i. p. 37.

Neapolitan divisions of Pino and Compère, detained on their way to the front, according to the usual system. The governor was a Brigadier-General Guillot, who seems to have been a negligent and easy-going officer. The rocky fortress was so strong that it never entered into his head that his restless neighbours the miqueletes might try a blow at it. It was a mere chance that on the day when the assault was delivered a marching battalion of Italian drafts, escorting General Peyri, who was coming up to take command of Pino's late division, happened to be billeted in the town below—next day they would have been gone.

It was clearly Guillot's carelessness, and the small numbers of his garrison, which inspired the miquelete chiefs with the idea of making an attack by surprise on this almost impregnable citadel. Rovira, the most active of them, got into communication with three young Catalans who passed as *Afrancesados* and were employed by the commissary Bouclier, who had charge of the magazines. One, Juan Marquez, was his servant, the other two, Pedro and Ginés Pons, were under-storekeepers. All three were mere boys, the oldest not twenty-one years of age. Marquez got wax impressions of various keys belonging to his master, including those of the store-vaults and of a postern gate leading into them from the foot of the ramparts, and made false keys from them. It was determined that a picked band of miqueletes should attempt to force their way into the place through the postern on the midnight of April 9th–10th. Rovira sent the details of his scheme to Campoverde, who, despite of his late fiasco at Barcelona, was delighted with the plan, and offered to come up with his field army to the north if the attempt should succeed.

The miquelete chiefs conducted their enterprise with considerable skill. On the 7th of April Rovira collected some 2,000 men at the foot of the Pyrenees, north of Olot, and threatened to make a descent into the French valleys beyond, in order to distract the attention of the enemy. On the 9th he countermarched for Figueras, and at dusk got within nine miles of it. At one in the morning his forlorn hope, 700 men under two captains named Casas and Llovera, came up under the ramparts, found their confederates waiting for them at the postern, and

were admitted by means of the false keys. They burst up out of the vaults, and caught the garrison mostly asleep[1]—the governor was captured in his bed, the main-guard at the great gate was surprised, and the few men who came straggling out of the barracks to make resistance were overpowered in detail. Only thirty-five men were killed or wounded on the part of the French, not so many on the Spanish side, and in an hour or less the place was won. The captors promptly admitted their friends from without, and ere dawn over 2,000 Catalans were manning the walls of the fortress. The material captured was immense—16,000 muskets, several hundred cannon, a great store of boots and clothing, four months' provisions for a garrison of 2,000 men, and 400,000 francs in the military chest. General Peyri, with the Italian *bataillon de marche* which was sleeping in the town below, was unable to do anything—there had been very little firing, and when some fugitives ran down from San Fernando, it was to tell him that the place was completely mastered by the enemy. He put his troops under arms, and drew off at daylight to Bascara, half-way to Gerona, with his 650 men, after having sent off the bad news both to Baraguay d'Hilliers on one side and to the governor of Perpignan on the other[2]. The former sent him out a battalion and a squadron, and told him to return towards Figueras and to place himself in observation in front of it till he was succoured. All the disposable troops in northern Catalonia should join him within two days. Peyri therefore

[1] Vacani, iii. p. 25, says that the best part of the garrison had been out on an expedition in the hills all the day, seeking for the bands who were said to be threatening the French frontier. They returned late at night tired out, and slept the sleep of the weary, while recruits and convalescents were furnishing the few guards considered necessary in such a strong place. A picket of Neapolitans who were in charge of the main gate were captured without resistance, being attacked, to their surprise, from the inside of the fortress.

[2] Napier suggests (iii. 222) that Peyri might have tried to assail San Fernando before the enemy was properly settled down into it. This seems a most doubtful criticism: he had only 650 men of drafts with him; neither he nor they knew the topography of the fortress; it was pitch dark; the strength of the enemy was unknown. The garrison had succumbed in a few minutes despite of all its advantages of position. To attack would have been foolhardy."

reoccupied Figueras town, and barricaded himself in it with 1,500 men—being quite unable to do more; he had to watch the Catalans introducing reinforcements into San Fernando without being able to molest them. Baraguay d'Hilliers did not come to his succour for some days, being unable to leave Gerona till he had called in some dangerously exposed outlying posts, and had strengthened Rosas, which was threatened by some English frigates, who showed signs of throwing a landing-party ashore to besiege it. He then came up with 2,000 men to join Peyri, while a more considerable force arrived from Perpignan under General Quesnel, who had charge of the Pyrenean frontier, and appeared with three line battalions, and two more of National Guards of the Gers and Haute-Garonne. Having 6,500 infantry and 500 cavalry concentrated, d'Hilliers was able to throw a cordon of troops round San Fernando and to commence its blockade on April 17th.

The place, however, was now fully garrisoned. Rovira had thrown into it, during the week when free entry was possible, miqueletes to the number of some 3,000, making a brigadier named Martinez, one of his most trusted lieutenants, the governor. On the 16th a reinforcement of regular troops arrived—part of the division of Baron Eroles, which had the most northern cantonments among the units of Campoverde's field army. Eroles had marched from Martorel by Olot, and had captured on his way the small French garrisons of that place and of Castelfollit, making 548 prisoners. Campoverde sent messages to say that he would arrive himself with larger forces in a few days. Having thrown Courten's division into Tarragona, he would bring up the rest of his available troops—Sarsfield's division and the remainder of that of Eroles, with all the miqueletes that he could collect. Meanwhile the local *somatenes* of central Catalonia pressed in close upon Gerona and Hostalrich, and kept Baraguay d'Hilliers in a state of great anxiety, for he feared that they might capture these places, whose garrisons had been depleted to make up his small field force.

The opportunity offered to the Spaniard was not one that was likely to last for long, since Napoleon, on hearing of the fall of Figueras, had issued orders for the concentration of some 14,000 troops from Southern France, a division under General Plau-

zonne from Languedoc and Provence, and five or six odd battalions more[1]. When these should arrive, in the end of April or the first days of May, the French in northern Catalonia would be too strong to fear any further disasters. But meanwhile Macdonald and Baraguay d'Hilliers had a fortnight of doubt and danger before them. The former proposed to march himself to Figueras, with what troops he could spare from Barcelona, but since its garrison was only about 6,000 strong, and the place was large and turbulent, it was clear that he could bring little with him. It was for this reason that he wrote to Suchet in such anxiety on April 16th, and begged for the loan of one or two divisions from the Army of Aragon. Till he got his answer, he did not himself move forth. Hence d'Hilliers alone had to bear the brunt of the trouble.

There is no doubt that Campoverde had a fair chance of achieving a considerable if temporary success; but he threw it away by his slowness and want of skill. Though aware of the capture of Figueras on April 12th, he did not start from Tarragona till the 20th, nor reach Vich in northern Catalonia till the 27th. He had then with him 6,000 infantry, mostly of Sarsfield's division, and 800 horse. Rovira drew near to co-operate, with those of the miqueletes of the Ampurdam who had not already thrown themselves into the fortress. The force collected ought to have sufficed to break through the thin blockading cordon which Baraguay d'Hilliers had thrown round the fortress, if it had been properly handled. But Campoverde was no general. On May 3rd the relieving army approached the place, the miqueletes demonstrated against the northern part of the French lines, while Sarsfield broke through at a point on the opposite side, near the town, and got into communication with Eroles, who came down with 2,000 men to join him. They fell together upon the French regiment (the 3rd Léger) on this front, which took refuge in the barricaded town and defended itself there for some time. According to all the Spanish narratives the three battalions in Figueras presently offered to surrender, and wasted time in negotiations, while Baraguay

[1] See Napoleon, *Correspondance*, xxii. no. 17,644. Plauzonne's regiments were the 3rd Léger, 11th and 79th Line, and four battalions of the 67th Line and one of the 16th Léger also crossed the frontier.

d'Hilliers was collecting the main body of his forces in a solid mass. Screened by an olive wood in his march, the French general suddenly fell on Sarsfield's flank and rear, while he was intent on the enemy in the town alone; a charge of dragoons cut up two of the Spanish regiments, and the rest gave way in disorder, Sarsfield falling back towards the plain, and Eroles retiring into the fortress. The reserve of Campoverde and the miqueletes were never seriously engaged. If they had been used as they should have been, the fight might have gone otherwise than it did, for counting the garrison of San Fernando and the irregulars, the Spaniards had a considerable superiority of numbers. They lost over 1,000 men, the French about 400 [1]. During the time while the blockading line was broken, Sarsfield had introduced into San Fernando some artillerymen (much needed for the vast number of guns in the place), and part of a convoy which he was conducting, but the greater portion of it, including a great drove of sheep, was captured by the enemy at the moment of the rout.

If Campoverde and his army had been given no other task save the relief of Figueras, it is probable that this combat would have been but the commencement of a long series of operations. But he received, immediately after his check, the news that Suchet had marched from Lerida on April 28th, and had appeared in front of Tarragona on May 3rd. The capital of Catalonia was even more important than Figueras, and it was necessary to hasten to its aid, for no regular troops had been left in the southern part of the principality, save the single division of Courten, which had hastened to shut itself up in the city. Accordingly Sarsfield was directed to take 2,000 infantry and the whole cavalry of the army, and to march by the inland to threaten Suchet's rear, and his communications with Lerida, while Campoverde himself came down to the coast with 4,000 men, embarked at Mataro, the nearest port in Spanish hands, and sailed for Tarragona, where he arrived in safety, to strengthen the garrison. Eroles came out of San Fernando with a few

[1] So the French narratives. Martinien's lists show three officers killed and thirteen wounded on May 3 before Figueras. The regiments which suffered most were the 3rd and 23rd Léger, each with one officer killed and four wounded.

hundreds of his own troops, before the blockade was fully re-established, and joined Rovira in the neighbouring mountains, leaving the defence of the fortress to Martinez with five regular battalions [1] and 3,000 miqueletes. Eroles and Rovira were the only force left to observe Baraguay d'Hilliers, and since they had only a few thousand men, mostly irregulars, they were able to do little to help the place. For the besieging force was strengthened in May by the arrival of Plauzonne's division from France, while Macdonald came up from Barcelona with a few battalions, and took over the command from Baraguay d'Hilliers. By the end of the month he had over 15,000 men, and had begun to shut in the fortress on its height by an elaborate system of contravallations, which he compares in his memoirs to Caesar's lines around Alesia. Martinez made a most obstinate and praiseworthy defence—of which more hereafter—and the siege of Figueras dragged on for many months, till long after the more important operations around Tarragona had come to an end. But after Campoverde's departure for the south there was never any hope that it could be relieved: all that its defenders accomplished was to detain and immobilize the whole 7th Corps, which, when it had garrisoned Barcelona and Gerona, and supplied the blockading force for San Fernando, had not a man disposable for work in other quarters. Thus Suchet had to carry out his operations against Tarragona without any external assistance, whereas, if Figueras had never been lost, he might have counted on much incidental help from his colleague Macdonald. This much was accomplished by the daring exploit of April 10th: if Campoverde had been capable of utilizing the chance that it gave him, its results might have been far more important.

[1] The regulars left in San Fernando were two battalions of Voluntarios de Valencia, one of Ultonia, and two of Antequera.

SECTION XXVIII: CHAPTER II

THE SIEGE AND FALL OF TARRAGONA. MAY–JUNE 1811

SUCHET had marched, as has been already mentioned, from Lerida, with Harispe's division, on April 28th, Frère's division following. On the 29th the head of the column reached Momblanch, where half a battalion was left behind in a fortified post, to keep open the Lerida road. On May 2nd the large manufacturing town of Reus, only ten miles from Tarragona, was occupied: on May 3rd the French advanced guard, Salme's brigade, approached the city, and drove in the Catalan advanced posts as far as the river Francoli. But the siege could not begin till Habert's force, escorting the battering-train, should come up from Tortosa; and this all-important column was much delayed. Its road ran along the seaside from the Col de Balaguer onward, and Codrington's squadron of English frigates and gunboats accompanied it all the way, vexing and delaying it, by bombarding it whenever it was forced to come within gunshot of the beach. This was practically all the opposition that Suchet met with: a few miqueletes had shown themselves in the hills between Reus and Momblanch, but they were too weak to fight. Campoverde had carried off the best both of regulars and irregulars to the relief of Figueras, and Courten, who had barely 4,500 men in his division [1], had wisely shut himself up in Tarragona, where every man was wanted: for the enceinte was very long, and the sedentary garrison consisted of only five or six battalions. The troops inside the walls did not amount, when the siege began, to 7,000 men: hence came the weakness

[1] The composition of the divisions of the Army of Catalonia was shifting, and hard to follow, but (as far as I can make out) Courten's division consisted of three battalions of Granada, two each of Almanza, Almeria, and America, while the sedentary garrison contained four or five battalions of the new Catalan 'Sections' or 'local line,' besides a battalion of Voluntarios de Tarragona.

shown in the early days; it was not till Campoverde's army came back from the north (May 10) that an adequate defensive force was in existence for such a large fortress.

Tarragona, though some of its fortifications were not skilfully planned, was a very strong place. The nucleus of the works was the circuit of the old Celtiberian town of Tarraco, which afterwards became the capital of Roman Spain. This forms the upper city in modern times. It is built on an inclined plane, of which the eastern end (530 feet above sea-level), where the cathedral lies, is the higher side, and the slope goes downhill, and westward: the southern face, that towards the sea, is absolutely precipitous, the northern one hardly less so. Large fragments of the Cyclopean walls built by the Celtiberians, or perhaps by the Carthaginians, are visible along the crest on both of these sides. On the west, the lowest part of the old town, a line of modern fortifications divided the upper town from the lower; there was a sharp drop along this line: in most places it is very steep, and the road of to-day goes up the hill-side in zigzags, to avoid the break-neck climb[1]. Below the fortifications of the upper city, and divided from them by a broad belt of ground free of houses[2], lay the port-town or lower city, clustering around the harbour, which is an excellent roadstead shut in by a mole 1,400 feet long, which runs out from the south-west corner of the place. The lower city was enclosed on its northern and western sides by a front of six bastions; its southern side, facing the port and the open sea, had not, and did not need, any great protection; it could only have been endangered by an enemy whose strength was on the water, and who could bring a fleet into action. There was a sort of citadel in the port-town, a work named the Fuerte Real, which lies on an isolated mound inside the north-west angle of the walls. About 400 yards west of the most projecting bastion of

[1] Apparently there was in 1811 no road of this sort, up the steep slope above the railway station of to-day; the main *chaussée* from Valencia entered the upper city at its north-western end, and there was no good road for carriages up the south-western point, as there is now (the so-called Despeñaperros).

[2] Long since built over. The line of the old fortifications of the upper city is now marked by a broad promenade, the Rambla de San Juan.

the place the river Francoli flows into the sea, at the western end of the harbour. In the angle between the river and the port was an outlying work, Fort Francoli, destined to keep besiegers away from the shipping, which they might easily bombard from this point, if it were not occupied. This fort was connected with the lower town by a covered way protected by a long entrenchment containing two lunettes.

Notwithstanding the great strength of the high-lying upper city, it had been furnished with a second line of defence, outside its old Roman walls. Low down the hillside five forts, connected by a wall and covered way, protected its whole eastern front from the edge of the heights as far as the sea. The Barcelona road, crawling along the water's edge, enters the place between two of these forts, and goes to the Lower, after sending a steep bypath up to a gate in the Upper, city [1].

On the west and north-west the high-lying fortress commands all the surrounding country-side. But to the due north there is a lofty hill about 800 yards from the walls, called Monte Olivo. This dominates the lower town, since it is 200 feet high, or more, though it is itself dominated by the upper town. An enemy in possession of it has every advantage for attacking the north front of the lower town. Wherefore, during the course of the last two years, the summit of the hill had been entrenched, and a very large hornwork, the Fuerte Olivo, constructed upon it. This was a narrow fort, following the shape of the crest of the hill, with a length of 400 yards, and embrasures for forty-seven guns. Its outer front was protected by a ditch hewn in the solid rock: its rear was only slightly closed with a low wall crowned by palisades, so as to leave it exposed to the fire of the upper city, if by any chance the enemy should get possession of it. Such an extensive work required a garrison of over 1,000 men—a heavy proportion of the 6,500 which formed the total force of the Spaniards at the commencement of the siege.

When Suchet arrived in front of Tarragona, and had driven the Spaniards within their works (May 3rd–4th), his chief engineer and artillery officers, Rogniat and Vallée, had to conduct a long and careful survey of the fortifications opposed to them.

[1] It is a stiff climb up a very steep ascent to enter the upper city by its 'Barcelona Gate.'

They concluded that the northern front of the city was practically impregnable, from its precipitous contours, and that the eastern front, though a little less rocky, was equally ineligible, because of the trouble which would be required to transport guns first across the high ground to the north-east, and then down to the seashore. The south front, being all along the water's edge, was inaccessible. There remained only the western front, that formed by the lower city, where the defences lay in the plain of the Francoli, and had no dominance over the ground in front of them. There was an additional advantage for the besieger here, in that the soil was partly river sand, partly the well-broken-up loam of suburban market gardens, and in all cases very easy to dig. But if they were to attack the west front, the engineers required the General-in-Chief to accomplish two preliminary operations for them. He must take Fort Olivo, which commanded with its flanking fires much of the ground on which they intended to work, and he must drive away from the northern side of the harbour the Anglo-Spanish squadron which lay there, since its heavy guns would enfilade all works started for the purpose of approaching the western front of Tarragona in the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Francoli.

This being the programme laid down, Suchet took up his positions round the fortress—Harispe's division had charge of the main part of the northern front, its French brigade (Salme) occupying the ground in front of Fort Olivo, while its two Italian brigades stretched eastward along the distant heights, curving round so as to cut the Barcelona road along the sea-coast with their extreme detachment. Frère's division had the central part of the lines, and lay on both sides of the course of the Francoli river, its main force, however, being on the left bank. Habert's division, which had just come up from Tortosa, was placed near the mouth of the river, and facing towards the port; it formed the right wing of the army, and covered the siege-park, which was established at the village of Canonge, about a mile and a half from the walls of Tarragona. The magazines and hospitals were fixed at the large town of Reus, nine miles to the rear, under a considerable guard; for though the road from thence to the French lines ran over the gentle undulations of the coast plain, yet there was always danger that bands of miqueletes might

descend from the hills for some daring enterprise. Several of the intermediate villages were fortified, to serve as half-way refuges for convoys and small parties on the move.

Some days were lost to the French in completing the survey of Tarragona, in settling down the troops into their permanent camps, and in bringing up from the rear, along the Tortosa road, the remainder of the battering-train and its munitions. It was not till May 8th that serious operations began. Suchet's first object was to drive away from the northern end of the harbour the English and Spanish ships, whose fire swept the ground about the mouth of the Francoli, across which his siege-works were to be constructed. With this object a large fort was constructed on the shore, in which very heavy guns, fatal to shipping, were to be placed. Commodore Codrington, who was lying in the harbour with a small squadron of two 74's and two frigates, assisted by several Spanish gun-boats, bombarded the fort incessantly, but what he destroyed in the day the French rebuilt with additions every night, and on May 13th the fort was sufficiently completed to receive its armament of 24-pounders. The ship-guns were unable to cope with them, and the vessels of the Allies during the rest of the siege were compelled to keep to the south end of the port, and could only vex the besieger's subsequent trench-building by a distant and ineffective fire. On the 16th a first parallel, directed against the most advanced Spanish work, Fort Francoli, was begun in the low ground beside the new fort.

Before this check to the squadron had been completed a great change in the situation was made by the arrival of Campoverde on May 10, with 4,000 regular troops brought by sea from Mataro —fractions of the divisions of Eroles and Sarsfield, though neither of these generals had come in person[1]. The garrison being strengthened up to 10,000 men, and raised in morale by the reinforcement, became very bold and enterprising. Sorties began almost at once: Harispe's division having seized on the

[1] The regiments that landed with Campoverde seem to have been the 2nd of Savoia (2 battalions), Voluntarios de Gerona, and two of the Andalusian regiments which had formed the core of Reding's old Granadan division, which marched to Catalonia in 1808, viz. Iliberia and Santa Fé, the first three battalions strong, the other with two.

13th May two slight outlying entrenchments below Fort Olivo, three battalions sallied out on the 14th and made a desperate attempt to retake them. It failed, but on the 18th an equally vigorous sortie was made against the fort beyond the Francoli, and the first parallel near it, by about 2,000 men, who drove in the trench-guards and destroyed a section of the works, but were finally thrust back into the lower city by the arrival of reinforcements led by General Habert. How hot the fighting had been here is shown by the fact that Suchet's dispatch owns to a loss of over 150 men, with three officers killed and eleven wounded. The sallying force lost 218, a figure which Suchet enlarges in his report to 250 killed and 600 wounded. On the 20th the Spaniards made a third sally, on a different front, far to the north-east, across the high ground north of the Barcelona road, and tried to break through the line of blockade kept up by Harispe's Italian brigades. This was on a smaller scale, and had no luck; it was apparently intended to open up communication with Sarsfield, who (marching by circuitous ways across central Catalonia) had reached Valls and Alcover, only ten miles from Tarragona, on the upper Francoli, with 1,200 men. This trifling force was to be the nucleus of an 'army of relief' which was to be collected from all quarters to threaten Suchet's rear. Sarsfield made his appearance known to his chief in Tarragona by lighting beacons on the mountain tops. Learning that the Spanish force was insignificant, Suchet detached two battalions and some cuirassiers to drive Sarsfield further away from Alcover, and did so with small loss, forcing him to retire to the mountains above Valls.

About this time the French artillery and engineer commanders reported to their chief that it would be at least ten days before they were in a position to begin a serious attack against the western front of the city, and Suchet resolved that the enforced delay should be utilized for an attack on Fort Olivo, whose capture would sooner or later be a necessity, if the main operations against the city were to prosper.

Accordingly, while the approaches against the west front went steadily on, a separate offensive advance against the Olivo was prepared. Between the 22nd and the 28th of May trenches were pushed towards the fort, and batteries containing thirteen

guns erected to bear upon it. Their fire had effected serious damage on the parapets and the artillery of the fort by the 29th, yet the engineers reported that they could not fill the ditch, which was dug in the solid rock, and could not promise to make accessible breaches beyond it. But they reported that the rear face of the work, which the French artillery could not reach, was very weak, the low wall and palisade closing the gorge being no more than nine feet high. There was also a gap in the front protection caused by the entry, into the right end of the fort, of an aqueduct which carried water down into Tarragona. This structure made a sort of bridge across the ditch; it had not been cut, but only closed with palisades, which were being rapidly demolished by the French cannonade [1].

On the night of the 29th Suchet made the rather rash venture of trying to escalade Fort Olivo at the two weak points. One column was to turn the work under cover of the darkness, and to endeavour to break in at the gorge in its rear. The other was to try the imperfect breach in the right front, by crossing the aqueduct, though it was only seven feet broad, if it should be found that the ditch was impassable. Meanwhile a general demonstration was to be made by scattered *tirailleurs* against the whole face of the Olivo, so as to distract the attention of the enemy, and the batteries down by the Francoli were to bombard the lower city with the same purpose. Both attacks were successful—more by luck than by their deserts, for the plan was most hazardous. The column which had gone round to the rear of the fort ran in upon a Spanish regiment [2] which was coming up the hill to relieve the garrison. The two forces hustled against each other in the dark, and became hopelessly mingled in a close combat just outside the postern gate of the gorge. The garrison was unable to fire upon their enemies, because they were intermixed among their friends, and, when the fight surged against the postern and the palisades, the French succeeded in

[1] This discovery was the work of the Italian engineer officer Vacani, whose work on the campaign of the Italian troops of Napoleon in Spain is one of the most valuable of our original sources. See his vol. v. pp. 175-6. He was with the assaulting column.

[2] Three battalions of Iliberia were holding the fort on the 29th; they had been much tried, and two battalions of the sister-regiment of Almeria were coming up to relieve them.

entering the gorge, some by scrambling up the low and weak defences, others by bursting in at the gate along with the Spanish reinforcements with whom they were engaged. They might have been checked, for the defenders were fighting fiercely, if the other attack had not also succeeded. But at the right front of the fort, where the second assault was made, though many of the forlorn hope fell into the ditch, a desperate charge took the storming-party across the seven-foot gangway of the aqueduct, and over the shattered palisades that blocked it. The garrison could tell by the noise of the musketry that the enemy had entered both in front and in rear, and were stricken by despair[1]. But the greater part of them clubbed together and continued a desperate resistance, which was only subdued when Suchet sent in all his reserves and the trench-guards to back the stormers. They were then beset on all sides, and finally overwhelmed.

The losses of the garrison were terrible—of the five battalions of Iliberia and Almeria, and the two companies of artillery which had been engaged—some 3,000 men in all—very nearly one-third, as it would appear, were slain or captured[2]. The pri-

[1] Vacani is very positive that the stormers at the aqueduct got into the fort before those at the gorge.

[2] Suchet says that except 70 officers and 1,000 men taken prisoners 'the whole of the rest of the garrison had perished' (ii. 60). Belmas (iii. 502) speaks of 970 prisoners and says that 1,200 were killed, but acknowledges that 'some of the Spaniards' got away. Vacani (v. 187) says that 'many' Spaniards escaped, but that the bulk of six battalions were destroyed, 1,000 being captured and 1,200 slain. The governor, Contreras, says that there were 4,000 men in the fort, and that somewhere about 2,000 were killed or wounded (p. 248). But the figures must have been lower: Iliberia was about 1,500 strong, Almeria about 1,200: there were also 200 gunners in the fort: the total garrison therefore was about 3,000. But at the end of the siege, a month later, Iliberia surrendered 368 unwounded men, and Almeria 464. They must have lost many hundreds during the last six weeks of the leaguer, yet were still 832 strong. It is hard to see that they can have lost more than 1,200 or 1,300 between them on May 29, and very probably Toreno and Arteche are right in putting the total loss at only 1,100 and odd. If so, the killed, including the gunners, must have been only between 300 and 400. The ever-accurate Schepeler gives 1,200 for the total loss (p. 433), and I suspect is nearest of all to the truth. Napier, as usual, merely reproduces Suchet's figures.

soners were about 970 in number, many wounded, including the commander of the fort, Colonel Gomez, who had received no less than ten bayonet stabs. Three or four hundred men had been killed —the French had given little quarter during the earlier part of the fighting. The remainder of the garrison had escaped into the city, by climbing over the low wall of the gorge and running down the slopes, at the moment of the final disaster. The French loss, according to Suchet, was only about 325 killed and wounded, and probably did not greatly exceed that figure. The assailants had, it must be confessed, extraordinary luck. If the turning column had not become mingled with the Spanish reinforcements it might never have been able to break into the gorge; while the other attack could not have succeeded if the governor had taken the proper precaution of cutting the aqueduct, which served the stormers as a bridge—for the ditch proved wholly impracticable, and the breach could not be approached.

On the morning after the assault the spirit of the Spaniards was so little broken that a sortie was made with the purpose of retaking the Olivo, the survivors of the two regiments which had lost it volunteering to head the attack. Campoverde thought that the French might be caught before they had made new defences to protect the weak rear face of the fort, but they had built up the entry of the gorge with sandbags, and the assault —led by Colonel O'Ronan, a Spanish-Irish officer—was beaten off with loss, though a few daring men not only reached the gorge, but scrambled in through its broken palisades to die inside the work. All the guns of the upper city were then turned upon the Olivo, and reduced its rear to a shapeless mass of earth. But this did not seriously harm the French, who burrowed into its interior and made themselves strong there. They only wanted to be masters of the hill because it flanked their projected approaches in the low ground, and did not intend to use it as their base for any further active operations.

After the Olivo disaster Campoverde held a council of war (May 30th), and announced to his officers that the means by which Tarragona could be saved was the collecting of a great army of succour to fall upon Suchet's rear. He was himself about to depart, in order to take command of it; Sarsfield's and Eroles's small detachments, all of which he would collect, must

form its nucleus. The *somatenes* of all central Catalonia should be called in, and the province of Valencia had promised to lend him a whole division of regulars. So saying, he departed by sea along with his staff and a number of the richer inhabitants of the city (May 31st). General Caro, who had hitherto acted as governor, was sent to hurry up the Valencians, and the command of the place was made over to an officer newly arrived from Cadiz, General Juan Senen Contreras [1], who by no means liked the task assigned to him. The garrison was still 8,000 strong, for just after the fall of the Olivo two battalions of regulars arrived from Valencia [2]—the first-fruits of the succours promised from that province—and a draft of 400 recruits landed from Majorca. It seems to have been a mistake of Campoverde to come to Tarragona at all—his presence would have been much more valuable in the interior, where a supreme commander was much wanted, and while he was shut up in the fortress (from May 10th to May 31st) little had been done outside. The Junta of Catalonia, now sitting at Montserrat, had been issuing many proclamations, but had not accomplished much in the way of gathering in the *somatenes*.

On June 3rd Campoverde reached Igualada, and established his head quarters there, but found only 3,000 men assembled under Sarsfield. He sent that general off to Tarragona, to act as second in command to Contreras, and took over charge of his few battalions; by calling in Eroles, and hunting up deserters and detachments, he had collected in a fortnight 5,280 regular infantry and 1,183 cavalry—all that there were of mounted men in Catalonia. The whole was much too small a force to justify him in attacking Suchet in his lines—even when the *somatenes* should come in to join him. All depended on the expected succours from Valencia, and they were slow in arriving. Charles

[1] See his pamphlet on the defence of Tarragona and his own responsibilities, printed in the 3rd volume of *Mémoires sur la Guerre d'Espagne*.

[2] Apparently 3rd battalion of Cazadores de Valencia, and 1st battalion of the *First* regiment of Savoia. This last must be carefully distinguished from the 1st battalion of the *Second* regiment of Savoia, which belonged to the Catalan army, and had already been brought into Tarragona on May 10th by Campoverde. See the history of the two in the Conde de Clonard's colossal work on the regimental histories of the Spanish line.

O'Donnell, the newly appointed Captain-General of that province, had made up a scheme for drawing off Suchet by attacking his garrisons in southern Aragon, and had gone off early in May with his main force against Teruel. This scheme had no effect whatever; Suchet had fixed his teeth into Tarragona, and was not to be distracted by any demonstrations against his more distant detachments. Campoverde grew so desperate that he offered to give over supreme command to O'Donnell, if the latter would come into Catalonia with his whole disposable force, and begin by attacking Mora, Suchet's great dépôt on the Ebro. The Valencian Captain-General, though he refused to take this responsibility, finally agreed to send a division of regulars under General Miranda by sea to join the Catalans. This force, about 4,000 strong, appeared at Tarragona on June 14th, and came ashore, but was immediately afterwards reshipped by Campoverde's orders, and transferred to Villanueva de Sitjes, where it landed, and marched inland to Igualada to join the 'army of succour,' which by its arrival was raised to nearly 11,000 regular troops.

While Campoverde was slowly beating up his reinforcements, Tarragona was already in grave danger. The formal attack on the lower city began on the night of June 1st, when Vallée and Rogniat, the commanders of the French artillery and engineers, declared that they had everything ready. The front selected for attack was the two south-westerly bastions, those called San Carlos and Orleans, but as a preliminary task it was necessary to drive the Spaniards out of the subsidiary and external defence formed by the outlying Fort Francoli, at the mouth of the river, and by the long entrenchment which joined it to the city, with the lunette of the Prince, a very small work, inserted in its midst. For Fort Francoli had a position which would enable it to enfilade the French trenches when they should draw near to the enceinte of the city.

On the night of June 1st the French threw up their first parallel at a distance of only a little over 300 yards from the bastion of Orleans: it was connected with the entrenchments beyond the Francoli by a zigzag trench. On the second night the parallel was completed for a length of 600 yards, and three batteries begun in it—one directed against the lunette of the

Prince and the line joining it to Fort Francoli, the other two against the bastion of Orleans and the adjacent curtain. On June 3rd the besiegers began to work forward by a flying sap towards the fort, and by the 7th had pushed their front trench to within twenty yards of the work. On that same day the artillery began to play against it, not only from the new batteries, but from the old ones beyond the river, which had previously been directed against the fleet. The fort was weakly built, and a practicable breach was made in its left face before the bombardment had been twelve hours in progress. Serious damage had also been done to the long entrenchment connecting Fort Francoli with the lower city. Contreras, rightly regarding the work as untenable, ordered its serviceable guns to be removed the moment after dusk set in, and bade its commander, Colonel Roten, to draw off the garrison, two battalions of the regiment of Almanza. They withdrew at 8.30, and an hour and a half later three French columns charged out of the trenches and seized the fort[1]. They were surprised to meet with no resistance, not having detected the withdrawal of the Spaniards. Finding themselves unopposed, they tried to push along the entrenchment from the fort towards the town, but were stopped, with some loss, by the guns of the Prince lunette.

The Spanish engineers had assured Contreras that the low-lying Fort Francoli would be untenable under the fire of the neighbouring bastion of San Carlos, the battery on the Mole on the other side of the harbour, and the heavy guns of the men-of-war. A fierce fire was opened against it from all these quarters, but proved insufficient to stop the French from burrowing into the ruins of the fort, connecting it with their trenches, and finally building in its right front a heavy battery, which bore along the line of the entrenchment and enfiladed the Prince lunette. This work faced northward, and exposed only a weak flank to the attack. Fort Francoli having ceased to be an obstacle, the besiegers could now throw out a second parallel from the first, which they had constructed in front of the bastion

[1] Suchet in his memoirs conceals the fact that the fort was already abandoned when his troops entered (ii. p. 72). But the evidence of Contreras, Schepeler, and other Spanish authorities is clear and unanimous.

of Orleans. Five new batteries were placed in it, some bearing on Orleans, some on San Carlos, and one having the special task of beating down the Prince lunette. The Spanish guns in the lower city answered with a fierce fire which caused much damage and took many lives, but the work, nevertheless, went on unceasingly. On June 16th all the new batteries were ready to commence their work.

Contreras had been much chagrined by the complete failure of the best efforts of his artillery to hold back the advance of the enemy, and reports that the morale of the troops was disagreeably affected by the arrival of the Valencian division of Miranda on June 14th and its prompt departure, after staying less than two days in the place. The garrison had looked upon it as a seasonable reinforcement, and were dashed in spirits when it made no stay with them. It seems to have been a complete mistake to have brought these 4,000 men to Tarragona at all: they should have been landed at once in Villanueva de Sitjes to join the army of succour.

Nevertheless the governor did his best to delay the progress of the French attack, and when his artillery proved ineffective, sent out two strong sorties on the 11th and 14th, which did some damage to the trenches[1] but were driven back in the end, as was inevitable. On the 16th all the new French batteries were ready, as well as that in Fort Francoli, and the bombardment began. The advanced batteries were within 120 yards of the bastions which they were attacking, and had a tremendous effect. By evening there was the commencement of a breach in the left face of the Orleans bastion, and several other parts of the enceinte were badly damaged, as was also the Prince lunette. This had not been effected without grave loss: one French battery had been silenced, a reserve magazine had been blown up, and the loss in men among the artillery had been very heavy. Nevertheless the assailants had the superiority in the cannonade, and were well satisfied. After dark the columns of stormers carried the Prince lunette by assault, one of the parties having slipped round its flank by descending on to the beach, where

[1] The first was a big affair, 3,000 men under Sarsfield taking part in it, but oddly enough it is not mentioned by Suchet or Belmas.

a few yards at the water's edge had been left unfortified. The battalion of the regiment of Almanza which held the work was practically exterminated. Thus the Spaniards lost the last of the outer protections of Tarragona, and the captured lunette became the emplacement of one more battery destined to play upon the bastion of San Carlos (June 17).

It was clear that the crisis was now at hand: the French were now lodged close under the walls of the city, and had already damaged its enceinte. But to storm it would be a costly business, and Contreras showed no signs of slackening in his energy, though his letters to Campoverde and his narrative of the siege both show that he thought very badly of his position. It was clear that both sides must now utilize their last resources: Suchet had already ordered up from beyond the Ebro the brigade of Abbé, which had hitherto been observing the Valencians, in order that its 3,600 men might compensate him for the heavy losses that he had suffered[1]. Contreras began to call on the Captain-General very hotly for help; at his departure Campoverde had promised that the army of succour should be pressing Suchet's rear within seven days, and now seventeen had elapsed and no signs of its approach were to be seen. He complained bitterly that many of his officers were failing him; even colonels had gone off by sea to Villanueva de Sitjes pretending sickness, or absconding without even that excuse[2]. Naturally the spirit of the rank and file had suffered from this desertion. There is good contemporary Spanish authority for the notion that Contreras himself contributed somewhat to the discouragement, by exhibiting too openly his failing hope, and stating that Tarragona must fall in a fortnight if the field army did not save it[3]. But so far as practical precautions went he did his duty,

[1] It seems to have arrived about June 20, in time for the storm on the 21st.

[2] See his memoirs, p. 273, and Arteche, x. 274.

[3] See especially Schepeler (i. 438). Arteche (x. 317) grants that he had not the iron resolution of Alvarez, the governor of Gerona, but thinks that he did his honest best, and this I think can hardly be denied. His own narrative is simple and modest, but does not conceal the fact that he was from the first downhearted, and feared the worst. Napier (iii. 240) calls him vacillating and deceitful. There is some foundation for the

strengthened the damaged places in the walls as best he could, and devoted much energy to seeing that the troops were properly paid and fed, and that the breaches were mined, and protected to the rear by cuttings and traverses. Very different was the conduct of Campoverde, who showed that he was absolutely unfit for command by his miserable conduct during the critical weeks. After having been joined by Miranda's Valencian division on June 16th he had 11,000 regular troops under his hand, a force insufficient to meet Suchet in the open field, but quite large enough to give the French grave trouble—indeed to make the continuance of the siege impossible if it were properly handled. But to bring effective pressure upon the enemy it was necessary to come up close to him, and Campoverde for many days tried a policy which was bound to fail. He kept far away, cut Suchet's communication by placing himself at Momblanch, and sent Eroles and other officers to molest the French detachments on the Lower Ebro and to cut off the convoys coming up from Tortosa and Lerida. Apparently he hoped that these distant diversions would cause Suchet to draw off great part of his army from the siege, in order to succour his outlying posts. But the French general did nothing of the kind, and took no notice of the loss of convoys, or the danger to remote dépôts; he stuck tight to the siege, and at this very time, by calling up Abbé's brigade from the south to Tarragona, he had deliberately risked even more than before on the side of Valencia. Between the 16th and the 24th June, the critical days in the siege, Campoverde and his 11,000 men had no effect whatever on the course of operations. Yet he kept sending messages to Contreras promising him prompt assistance, and on the 20th bade him dispatch Sarsfield out of the city, to assume command of his old division in the fighting which was just about to begin. That fighting never took place—to the Captain-General's eternal disgrace—for at the last moment he flinched from placing himself within engaging distance of Suchet. It seems clear that his true policy was to push much closer to the enemy's lines, so as to force the French to come out against him, and then either to let

former charge (see p. 513 below), but the latter seems unjustifiable. The only evidence brought to justify the accusation can be explained away (see Codrington's letters in the appendix to Napier, vol. iii).

them attack him in some strong position in the hills to the north-east of Tarragona, where their cavalry would have been useless, or else to avoid an engagement by a timely retreat when Suchet should have been drawn well away from the fortress. In either case he would have compelled his adversary to draw so many men away from the siege that it could not have proceeded. For it would have been useless for Suchet to march against him with less than 7,000 or 8,000 men, and the total of the besieging army had dwindled down to 16,000 by this time, while Abbé's reserve brigade had not yet come up. Probably, as Napier suggests, a blow at the French magazines and hospitals at Reus, only ten miles from Tarragona, would have forced Suchet to draw off two divisions for a fight, and Campoverde need not have accepted it, unless he had found himself some practically impregnable position. But to skulk in the hills many miles away and send detachments against outlying French posts could have no effect.

While Campoverde hesitated, Suchet took the lower city of Tarragona by a vigorous effort. At seven o'clock on the evening of the 21st the assault was delivered by five storming-columns, composed of the massed grenadier and *voltigeur* companies of all his French regiments, 1,500 strong, and supported by a brigade under General Montmarie. There were now two good breaches in the bastions of San Carlos and Orleans, the curtain between them had also been much injured, and even the Fuerte Real, the inner stronghold behind the Orleans bastion, had been damaged by shot and shell which passed over the outer works. Contreras had sent down into the lower city 6,000 out of the 8,000 men who were still at his disposition, and had handed over the charge of them to Sarsfield, the officer who had the best reputation in the whole of Catalonia. But by an ill-chance there was actually no one in command when the assault was delivered. Campoverde's dispatch recalling Sarsfield to the field army had come to hand that morning, and Contreras, thinking himself bound to obey it, sent Sarsfield a passport to leave the city, and designated General Velasco to take his place. Sarsfield, whose courage cannot be impeached, but whose judgement was evidently at fault on this afternoon, left at once, embarking on board a boat in the harbour at three o'clock,

without going to see Contreras or waiting for the arrival of the officer who was to supersede him. He merely sent for the senior colonel in the lower city, handed over the command to him, and put out to sea at a moment's notice. Four hours later, when the storm took place, Contreras was not aware that Sarsfield had yet departed, and Velasco, coming down to take charge of the troops, found himself in the middle of the fighting before he had reached the walls, or discovered the manner in which their garrison was distributed. There was clearly something wrong here—apparently Sarsfield and Contreras were not on good terms, and the former acted with small regard for the welfare of the service [1].

At seven o'clock Suchet let loose the stormers, who were led by the Italian General Palombini, while, to distract the attention of the garrison to other points, he ordered a general bombardment of the northern front, and showed a column on the side of Fort Olivo. The assault was immediately successful at both the critical points: the forlorn hope on the side of the Orleans bastion, starting from its ditch, went up the breach like a whirlwind, losing somewhat from the musketry fire of the defenders but not from their cannon, for all had been silenced. The Spaniards were cleared out so quickly from the bastion that

[1] Toreno (ii. p. 544) makes out that the fault was with Contreras, and Napier, who used far more violent language, says that he 'acted a shameful part. . . . The assault was momentarily expected, yet he ordered Sarsfield to embark immediately, averring that he had Campoverde's peremptory commands. Sarsfield remonstrated vainly, saying that the troops would be left to an inefficient subordinate, but was compelled to embark, and Velasco, coming a few hours later, found only the dead bodies of his garrison. Contreras then assured Codrington and the Junta that Sarsfield had gone without orders, and betrayed his post!' There is much misrepresentation in this: (1) Contreras *had* Campoverde's command to send him Sarsfield without delay. (2) He passed the order on to Sarsfield, but did not know that the latter had gone off, without waiting a moment, after sending him a note to say that Don José Carlos, the senior colonel in the lower city, was incompetent to take command. Naturally Contreras thought that Sarsfield would have waited to see Velasco and hand over the troops to him. (3) Therefore Contreras was correct in saying to the Junta that Sarsfield departed 'sin conocimiento mío,' though he had sent him a passport to leave the town. See Arteche, ix. 288-9.

they had not time to fire two mines, which would have blown up the breach and the storming-column if they had worked. They rallied for a few minutes at the gorge, but were driven from it by the French reserve, who poured into the town. At the San Carlos breach matters went almost as rapidly: the first attacking column was checked, but when the second supported it, the united mass carried the breach and burst into the town; a retrenchment and a row of palisades erected behind the breach were crossed in face of a half-hearted defence. All the columns having penetrated within the walls, those who turned to the left attacked the Fuerte Real, the weak and somewhat damaged work which served as citadel to the lower city: it was carried by assault without any great difficulty, partly because its earthen ramp had been somewhat damaged by the bombardment, and could be climbed at some points, but more because the garrison defended themselves very badly, and gave way when they saw that the streets on their flanks and behind them were inundated by the enemy. The other section of the stormers, inclining to their right, moved towards the mole and the large magazines at its base, where they met General Velasco, who had only arrived at the moment that the assault began, with the Spanish reserve. There was fierce fighting here for a moment, but, turned by a column which had passed around their flank by the quay at the water's edge, Velasco's men broke like the rest. The whole of the garrison rushed up the slope, towards the one gate which leads into the upper city, and finally entered it under cover of a heavy fire kept up from the neighbouring ramparts. Contreras reports that some of the pursuers came on so fiercely that they were shot down while actually battering at the closed gate.

The losses of the two parties were about equal in numbers—Contreras reports that he found no more than 500 and odd men missing when the battalions from the lower city were reassembled; Suchet gives 120 killed and 362 wounded as his total loss. The casualties on both sides would have been heavier if the garrison had fought better—but it is clear that, when the breaches were once gained, no serious attempt was made to defend the Fuerte Real, the retrenchments, or the barricaded houses of the lower city. Only Velasco's reserve battalions

made any fight in the streets; the rest fled early. The French might perhaps have made more captures—they only took 200 wounded prisoners—if they had not turned at once to plundering the houses and magazines. But they fell into great disorder; many of the unfortunate inhabitants of the quarter about the port were not only stripped of their goods but murdered, and a great number of dwellings were wantonly set on fire. Eighty guns were captured on the walls of the lower city, and a great quantity of food and stores in the dépôts along the quay. But the soldiers destroyed more than was saved—especially in the wine stores.

Not the least disastrous result of this unhappy affair was that the harbour was now closed to the Spaniards. The English men-of-war and the native merchant vessels which had hitherto sheltered under the west end of the mole had to put out to sea. The traders went off to Villanueva, Minorca, or Valencia, but Codrington's squadron sought the bare roadstead off Milagro Point, under the precipitous southern face of the upper city. Here there were no quays, and when the sea was rough it was impossible to land. But in ordinary weather boats could communicate freely with the shore, and Tarragona was not yet deprived of its access to the water, though that access had become difficult and dangerous. Suchet proceeded to make it more so on the 23rd, when he erected a battery, near the base of the mole, to play on the roadstead. Landing, however, was made rather exciting than dangerous by these guns, which never did much harm.

On the morning after the storm of the lower city the French engineers began to make surveys for the attack on the inner line of defence of Tarragona. Its strength lay in its commanding position, and in the fact that along many parts of its short front the ground just below it was too steep and too rocky to allow of approaches being constructed on it. Its weakness was that the wall was weak and old—a seventeenth-century work built only to resist the cannon of that day. There was no ditch or other outer defence, unless a hedge of prickly aloes counted as such. The front was composed of four bastions; counting from north to south they were named San Pablo, San Juan (at whose left side lay the only gate), Jesus, and Cervantes. The last

named overhung the precipitous cliff looking down to the sea above Milagro Point. The French engineers reported in favour of making the attack on the curtain wall between San Juan and San Pablo, the ground here being less steep than elsewhere, and showing soil which could be dug into; there was also some cover to be found, in half-ruined houses along the road up to the gate. Moreover the other, or southern section of the wall, was not only on a steeper ascent, but might be exposed to high-trajectory fire from the ships in the roadstead below. The first parallel, therefore, was thrown up opposite San Juan and San Pablo, with a communication to the rear covered by the buildings and gardens along the road, and three batteries were planned in it, and commenced on June 24th. A fourth battery, down in the plain outside the city, was to co-operate by a flanking fire uphill.

This day saw Campoverde's first and last demonstration in favour of the garrison. It was a miserable affair. Driven to do something by Contreras's appeals, and by the openly displayed discontent of his own army, he at last drew in close to the French lines. On the 23rd his army marched from Momblanch to Villarodona, fifteen miles north-east of Tarragona. On the next day it was divided into two columns; the first (composed of Miranda's Valencian division) marched over the hills, with orders to fall upon the encampments of Harispe's Italian brigades on the north-east side of the French lines. The second, or Catalan division, under Sarsfield, with which went the Captain-General himself, marched by another road more to the east, and was to come into line on Miranda's left. Meanwhile Contreras was to make a sally out of the eastern side of Tarragona with 4,000 men of the garrison, and to attack Harispe's rear when he saw his front engaged with the 'army of succour.' Both Campoverde's columns reached the points designated for them, Miranda getting unopposed to Pallaresos, and the second division to Cattlar, three miles further east. Suchet, warned by his outlying cavalry, concentrated Harispe's and part of Frère's divisions in the rear of his lines to the French left of Fort Olivo, leaving Habert, Abbé, and the rest of Frère's troops to hold the lower city and the trenches. His line, composed of some 8,000 men including

all his cavalry, was plainly visible both to the Spaniards outside and those within the city, and Contreras formed his sallying column ready to rush down when the first cannon-shot should be heard. But Miranda, on finding himself in touch with the enemy, sent back messages to the effect that he was not sure of his route, that the French seemed very strong, and that he dared not advance. Instead of depriving him of his command, and then bringing up the second column to the help of the first, Campoverde, after some hesitation, gave him leave to draw back, and both divisions retired that night to Vendrils, ten miles to the rear, in the eastern hills. Not a shot had been fired, and Contreras, whose men had been waiting under arms the whole afternoon, had to draw them back into the city without having seen a single man of the relieving army, which, though only four miles away, was hidden from him by the intervening hills. So ended a day of great peril for Suchet, who with 11,000 men in front of him, and 4,000 more ready to attack his rear, might well have suffered a disaster, or at least have proved unable to prevent the junction of the two hostile forces. For the Spaniards were not bound to descend and attack him in the plain, but might have manœuvred along the hills and forced him to take the offensive in unfavourable ground, under pain of seeing them break his blockading line. Codrington summed up the situation by writing to his chief, Pellew, that 'the Marquis [Campoverde] blamed Generals Miranda and Caro, while the latter retorted the accusation, and I am inclined to think by giving full credit to what each says of the other, neither will suffer ignominy beyond that to which his conduct has entitled him.' For Tarragona, as Contreras was truly repeating in every dispatch that he sent out, was in imminent danger, and if the army of succour did not give it *immediate* help might fall at any moment. The city, as a matter of fact, was taken only four days later.

Campoverde, however, had now formed the conclusion that he was still too weak to attack Suchet. He wrote orders to Contreras to send him out of the city his two best regiments, Iliberia and Almeria, and General Velasco to command them. He made a desperate appeal to the *somatenes* to rally to his colours, which had little effect, for his reputation was now gone, and he was sus-

pected of timidity or even of treason. Finally he got news that there was a small British expeditionary force in Catalan waters, and sent his lieutenant Eroles to sea, to look for it, and to invite it to land at Villanueva and join him. In a week or so he would have 20,000 men, as he supposed, and would then try something desperate. Meanwhile, unjustly suspecting Contreras of cowardice, he sent secret letters into Tarragona to the brigadier-generals of the garrison, bidding them depose and confine the governor if he showed signs of capitulating. Disgusted at this move, the generals showed the epistles to Contreras, who was driven still deeper into despair by seeing that the Captain-General distrusted him, regarded his views as to the danger of the city as exaggerated, and was evidently deferring succour for an indefinite period. Nevertheless he concealed his knowledge of the plan for his deposition, and prepared, under protest, to send the regiment of Almeria off by sea; to dispatch Iliberia also he refused, saying that his garrison was already insufficient. But rough weather on the 27th prevented the regiment from embarking from the dangerous Milagro roadstead, which was unapproachable by boats during an east wind.

Suchet, freed from a dire responsibility by the disappearance of the army of succour on the night of the 24th, resolved to hurry matters, lest it should presently come forward again in greater strength. On the following day the siege troops pushed forward by zigzag approaches to within 150 yards of the wall of the upper city, and commenced a second parallel in front of the curtain between San Juan and San Pablo. This was done under a hot and effective fire which cost many lives; the completion of the projected batteries, and more especially the hauling of their cannon up steep slopes and among ruins, took more time than the engineer officers had calculated to be necessary. It was not till the morning of the 28th that the twenty-two heavy guns destined for the breaching had been got into place, and that the fire was opened.

These three days, the 25th–26th–27th of June, were a time of agony for the unfortunate Contreras, who was distracted from his primary duty of preparing to receive the assault by having to deal with Campoverde's plot for deposing him, and other problems. The most important of these was the arrival in the

roadstead on the 26th of a flotilla, which brought not only some small reinforcements from Valencia and Murcia, but about 1,100 British infantry[1] and a half-company of artillery under Colonel Skerret. This little force had been sent by General Graham from Cadiz at the desire of the Regency, which was seeking in all quarters for help for Tarragona. Colonel Skerret had Graham's orders to do everything that could be done for the place, short of placing his detachment in any position where it was exposed to serious danger of having to capitulate, i.e. he was forbidden to land it if he should think Tarragona untenable, unless he judged himself able to bring off the troops by sea in the moment of disaster. On the morning of his arrival the weather was so rough that no boat could get in to the shore, and communication with Contreras was opened up by a sailor who swam ashore with a letter. The governor thus found himself offered the aid of the British force if he would guarantee that it would be able to escape should the town fall—a most hampering condition. In the evening, the surf having somewhat abated, Colonel Skerret came ashore, and was joined next morning by an engineer and an artillery officer, as also by General Charles Doyle, and by Codrington, the commander of the British squadron off the Catalonian coast. They conferred with Contreras, who told them that he feared the town was untenable, and that he intended, when the walls should be breached, not to make a prolonged defence, but to sally out of the Barcelona gate, and to try to cut his way to join Campoverde. He thought that the sortie must succeed, since the French would be intent on a storm on the western side of the fortress, and would never expect an attack to be delivered at the same moment from its eastern side. He therefore invited Skerret to land his 1,200 men and take part in the enterprise. But if he preferred to join him in withstanding the approaching storm by the French, he might choose whatever point he liked in the enceinte, and defend it. It is clear that at this moment the governor was himself hesitating between the two alternatives, and that it

[1] The troops were the 2/47th, a detachment of the 3/95th, and some light companies lent by the governor of Gibraltar, 1,147 in all, counting the gunners. See Graham's dispatches to Lord Liverpool and to Colonel Skerret of June 14th, 1811.

relieved his mind to throw the responsibility of choice on Skerret.

The British officers, military and naval, spent the afternoon in going round the city. They agreed with Contreras that the wall was weak and likely to be breached without much difficulty. This being so, was it consistent with Graham's directions to land the troops? The sortie might fail, and the garrison, Spanish and English, might be driven back into the town and captured. A defence of the breach might also fail, and in that case it would be almost impossible to get off the troops by sea, since if Skerret's own single boat had had the greatest difficulty in coming ashore in the surf, it was certain that many boats, hastily manned and crammed with soldiers, and escaping under the fire of the pursuing French, would come to grief on a large scale. Skerret and Codrington, after much consultation, resolved that they dared not bring the British troops ashore, for they could not guarantee that the men could be taken away again. They therefore refused both of Contreras's alternative offers. Just at this moment Baron Eroles arrived from Campoverde, with an appeal to Skerret to land at Villanueva de Sitjes and join the 'army of succour.' With Codrington's approval the colonel consented to do so[1], and set sail northward early in the morning of the 28th. It cannot be disputed that this whole business was most unhappy in its results. That a British force should appear in the roadstead for 36 hours, and then depart without landing a man, appeared to the garrison of Tarragona to prove that their own condition was hopeless. If there had been a reasonable hope of defending the town successfully, as they argued, the British would have come ashore. Their departure caused deep discouragement, and Contreras was no doubt right in stating that next after Campoverde's conduct that of Skerret

[1] That this represents pretty accurately what happened is, I think, clear from the comparison of Codrington's very full letter to General Graham (see his *Life*, i. 225), Skerret's report to Graham and the Regency (printed in Arteche, ix. pp. 544–5), and Contreras's own narrative of the siege. This version, as it will be seen, differs from that of Napier, who is much harder on Skerret than he deserves—though the colonel was an unlucky officer and distrusted by his subordinates (see e. g. Sir Harry Smith's autobiography, i. pp. 118–19).

was the most active cause of the demoralization which the garrison showed on the next day. It would have been far better that the expedition should never have appeared. Yet it is hard to blame Skerret or his adviser, Codrington. They had Graham's orders that the men were not to be placed in a position where they might have to capitulate, and it could not be disputed that Tarragona on June 27th was such a position[1]. It would have been better not to tie Skerret's hands by any conditions, and to leave him free to act as he thought best for the interest of Great Britain and Spain. The addition of 1,100 steady infantry to the force defending the breaches might very possibly have wrecked Suchet's assault; even if their effort had failed, the loss of two battalions would have been a lesser shock to British prestige in eastern Spain than their withdrawal into ignominious safety at the moment of danger.

Contreras spent the few hours that remained to him after Skerret's departure in hesitation between the idea of cutting his way out of Tarragona along the eastern road, and that of defending the town to the last possible moment. He finally resolved that he would hold the walls for one day only, and would evacuate the city on the night of the 28th, if the French had made any impression during the first twenty-four hours of the bombardment. The main body of the garrison, divided into three columns, was to make its exit from the Rosario gate, while 1,400 men remained to hold the walls as long as they could, with orders to save themselves if possible and follow the rest when the enemy should break in. Officers and men alike were informed of this, and had their destined positions in the sortie explained to them. It seems likely that the knowledge that they were intended to abscond in a few hours made the troops less obstinate in their defence when the assault came. But meanwhile Contreras made proper preparation for holding back the enemy till the destined time of departure. He told off

[1] The critical phrase of Graham's instructions to Skerret was: 'You will before landing your detachment state to the governor that you must have at all times free and open communication with his Majesty's ships of war: and in the event of the place being under the necessity of surrendering, that you are at liberty to withdraw the troops on board the said ships previous to the capitulation.' The orders are dated June 14.

his best regiments to the exposed front, and constructed a second line of defence behind it, by barricading and loopholing the houses of the Rambla, the broad street above the enceinte, and by blocking the narrow lanes which lead up to it with barrels filled with stones, so that from wall to wall there was a continuous inner fortification. But all this was a temporary arrangement—the garrison was to hold out till night only, and then escape by a great sortie.

Unfortunately the sortie was never made—for Suchet pushed matters so fast that the bombardment and the assault were all over in twelve hours. The twenty-two guns in the breaching batteries opened at dawn, and soon began to damage the weak old walls in the most effective style. The French had originally intended to make two breaches, one to the left in the curtain near the San Pablo bastion, the other to the right nearer the bastion of San Juan. But finding the latter hard to complete owing to the misdirection of one of his batteries, Suchet had the whole force of the battering turned on to the spot nearer to San Pablo, which he regarded as most favourable for his purpose. By four o'clock in the afternoon there was a breach over 30 feet broad at this point, all the guns in the adjacent flanks of the two bastions had been silenced, and nearly all those along the whole front. The explosion of a powder magazine had completely wrecked the Cervantes bastion at the other end of the Spanish line. Notwithstanding that the musketry fire of the garrison was still unsubdued, and that the breach was not very wide, Suchet determined to risk all, by assaulting the place in the later hours of the long summer afternoon. Three columns, each composed of 400 men of the *compagnies d'élite* of various regiments, were sent forward into the advanced trenches: 1,200 men more under General Habert crept up to the shelter of the front houses of the lower city. A separate force of five battalions under General Montmarie marched outside the walls, and placed itself in the low ground facing the Rosario gate, but out of gun-shot. This column was to advance towards that gate if the assault succeeded, and was to be admitted by the stormers, if they won their way into the north-west angle of the upper city, just behind the breach, from which the gate was not far distant.

At five o'clock the three storming-columns burst out from

three separate points of the trenches and raced for the breach, which they reached by no means simultaneously, for two of them were somewhat hindered by the aloe hedge below the wall, which had not been entirely broken down by the bombardment. They received a tremendous musketry fire from the whole front, but only three guns in the left side of the San Juan bastion plied them with grape: the rest of the Spanish artillery had been dismounted or disabled. Contreras had filled the breach with the remains of the two battalions of Provincial Grenadiers of Castile, a corps which had been serving with credit in Catalonia since the autumn of 1808; in support was the regiment of Almeria, also reckoned a good unit. The important retrenchment in the Rambla was held by the regiment of Almanza; of the rest of his force there was a less proportion along the front of attack, and a greater proportion placed on the unassailed south and north flanks of the city than was wise. Troops should have been heaped unsparingly upon the breach.

The first French column that reached its destination came on in some disorder, got half-way up the crumbling débris on the breach, and recoiled under the musketry fire from its crest. But when the others arrived, and General Habert and a crowd of other officers put themselves at the head of the mass, and led a second assault, it was successful. The stormers rolled over the summit of the breach and trampled down the Provincial Grenadiers. The regiment of Almeria, which had been placed behind in column, with orders to charge the enemy with the bayonet the moment that he broke through, gave way—according to Contreras—without carrying out his command. The main body of the French then swept down into the street behind the breach, but some turned to their left to try to open the Rosario gate to Montmarie, and others made to their right and swept the ramparts as far as the Cervantes bastion. The Spaniards had rallied at the retrenchments along the line of the Rambla, and made here a better defence than on the far more tenable walls. The assault had succeeded in half an hour[1]—the street-fighting

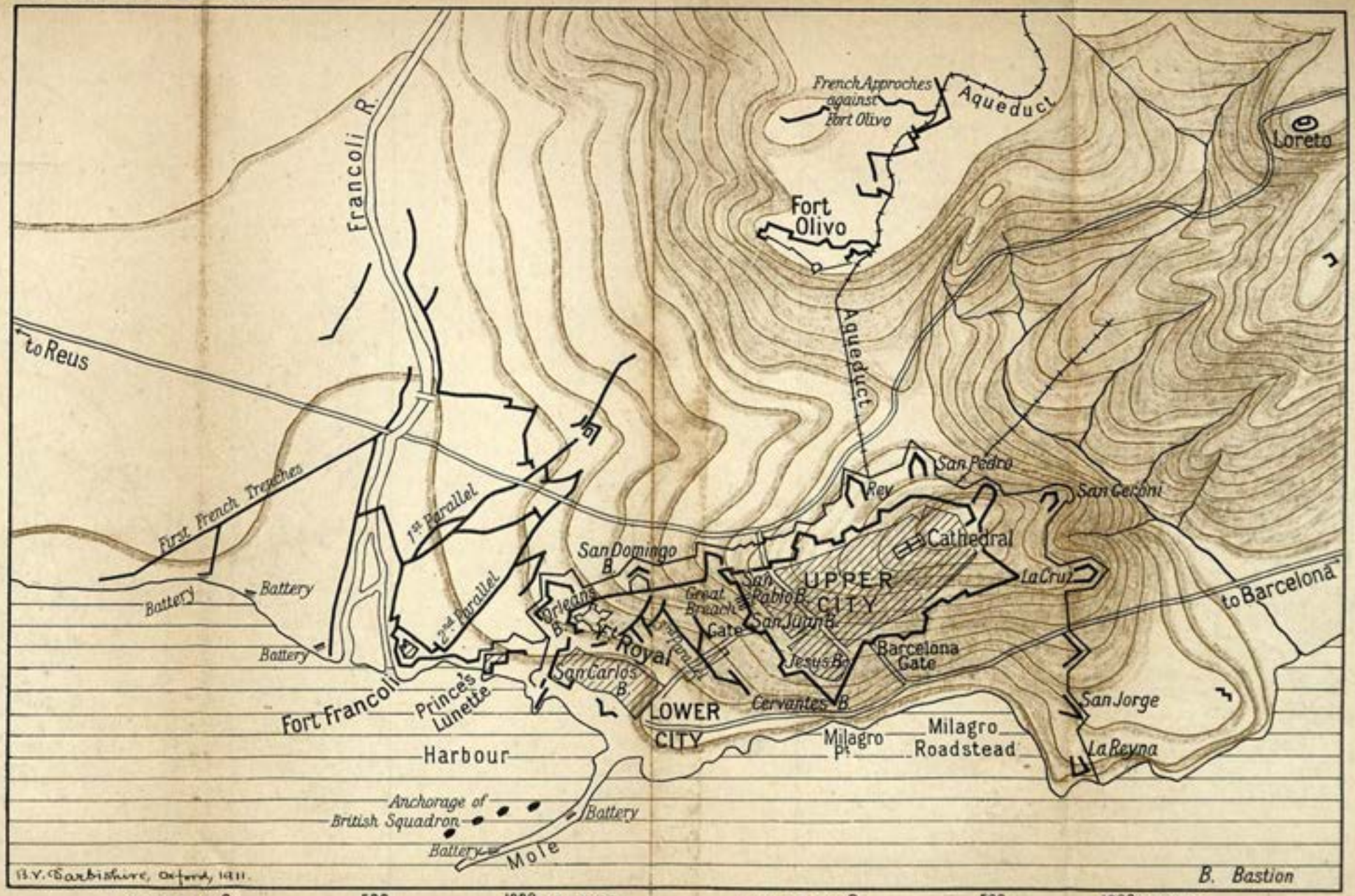
[1] Codrington, looking on from his ship, says that the storm succeeded 'almost immediately,' and that 'from the rapidity with which they [the French] entered, I fear they met with but little opposition.' (*Life*, i. 227.) This is borne out by Contreras's narrative.

which followed was prolonged and bitter. But when the French reserves arrived and entered the upper city, the barricaded street was passed, the Rosario gate was burst open, so that Montmarie's column got in upon the Spanish flank, and the resistance went to pieces. Contreras, manfully trying to bring up a battalion of Savoia, his last intact regiment, for a charge, was bayoneted and taken prisoner. One of the divisional generals, Courten, bethinking himself of the proposed sortie that was to have taken place that evening, led out a disorderly remnant of 3,000 men by the Barcelona gate, and tried to escape along the seashore. They had not got far when they ran into one of Harispe's Italian brigades and some squadrons of *chasseurs à cheval*, which had been set to watch this obvious bolt-hole. When checked, some of the demoralized troops tried to turn back towards the city, others dispersed and strove to get away across the hills, some hundreds stripped, and endeavoured to swim out to the British ships, which were lying in the Milagro roadstead[1]. A fair number of these were saved by the boats of the *Blake* and her consorts, which ran inshore to pick them up. But many more were cut down by the French cavalry on the beach, and it was some time before the excited riders would give quarter, and accepted the surrender of Courten and the survivors. General Velasco, the second-in-command in the city, had the luck to escape across the mountains almost alone, and brought the bad news to Campoverde.

While this ineffective attempt at a sally was in progress, the street-fighting in the city above was still going on. Isolated bodies of the Spaniards made a most desperate resistance: Colonel Gonzales, the brother of Campoverde, attempted to hold out in the cathedral with 300 men, but was killed with all followers after a brave resistance. The fact that many small parties defended themselves for a time in barricaded private houses gave the French an excuse for something that almost amounted to the systematic massacre of non-combatants. All the larger dwellings were broken open, whether shots had been fired from their windows or no, and a great proportion of their inhabitants murdered. Of the 4,000 corpses which littered the

[1] For details of this sally see Codrington's letter of July 29 in his *Life*, i. p. 228.

TARRAGONA



B.V. Barbishire, Oxford, 1911.

streets of Tarragona more than half were those of civilians, and according to the Spanish official report 450 women and children were among the slain [1]. As one Spanish authority bitterly remarks, the victorious stormers generally gave quarter to any man wearing a uniform, and let off their fury on priests and unarmed citizens. Plunder was even more general than murder, and there was the inevitable accompaniment of drunkenness and rape. Knowing what happened at Badajoz in April 1812, it is not for the British historian to dilate with too great moral indignation on the doings of Suchet's soldiery. Suffice it to say that all the atrocities afterwards seen at Badajoz were suffered by the unhappy people of Tarragona, and that the actual slaughter of non-combatants was much greater—about 100 inhabitants are believed to have been murdered at Badajoz, more than 2,000 in the Catalonian city. Spanish authorities state that the Poles and Italians behaved decidedly worse than the native French. The officers made some attempt to check the orgie, but (like the British at Badajoz) they failed: riot and slaughter went on all night, and it was not till the next day that order was restored. One of the most dreadful incidents of the storm was that many individuals, both soldiers and civilians, tried to escape to the Milagro roadstead by climbing down the precipitous south front of the city, and, losing their footing, were dashed to pieces or mortally maimed on the beach below.

The garrison, owing to the last-received reinforcements, was over 10,000 strong at the moment of the storm; as Suchet accounts for more than 8,000 prisoners [2], the actual loss at the storm cannot have been much over 2,000 men. But to the 10,000 Spaniards killed or captured on June 28th we must add the losses of the garrison during the earlier operations. It seems that the Army of Catalonia lost in all 14,000 or 15,000 men in this disastrous siege. A certain amount of the wounded, however, had been sent off from time to time on English ships to Majorca and other safe destinations, and survived to fight another day. The French casualties during the siege amounted

[1] Those who like to sup on horrors may read the original document in Arteche's Appendix X to his tenth volume, pp. 546–8.

[2] See table XX in Appendix.

to 924 killed and 3,372 wounded—a total of 4,296[1]. This was a very heavy proportion out of the 22,000 men[1] who were from first to last engaged in the operations; and if the sick, who are not included in Suchet's report along with the wounded, are deducted from the survivors, it is clear that the army must have been reduced to a dangerously low figure by June 28th, and that the Spanish authorities[2] who estimate the total loss of their enemies at 6,000 cannot be far out.

But the effect produced was worth the effort which had been made: nearly two-thirds of the regular troops of the Army of Catalonia had been destroyed. The great fortress, which for three years had been the base of the Spanish resistance, had been taken; there was now no considerable place left in the hands of the patriots —Solsona, Berga, Cardona, Seo de Urgel, and the other towns which they still retained were of small importance. They had lost their one fortified harbour, and for the future their communication by sea with Valencia, the Balearic Isles, and the British fleet, could only be conducted hastily and, as it were, surreptitiously; for any port, to which their forces in the inland might descend for a moment, was always liable to be attacked and seized by a French flying column. How nearly the spirit of resistance was crushed in the principality by the stunning blow which Suchet had inflicted will be shown in our next chapter.

Meanwhile, having reorganized his troops, and determined that the upper town of Tarragona should be fortified and garrisoned, but the harbour town dismantled and abandoned, the French commander was at liberty to proceed further with his scheme for the conquest of eastern Spain. But there was bound to be some preliminary delay before he could deliver his great blow against Valencia. One brigade had to be told off to escort the 8,000 Spanish prisoners to Saragossa; another had to return to the south to deal with the insurgents of Aragon, who had been left comparatively unmolested while Abbé was drawn off to the siege. Suchet himself—soon to be a marshal, for the Emperor carried out his promise that 'he should find his baton within the walls of Tarragona'—marched with some 7,000 or 8,000 men, all that was left disposable, to open

[1] See table XX in Appendix.

[2] e. g. see Schepeler, i. 343, and Arteche, x. 314.

up communications with Barcelona. Before his departure he had a curious interview with Contreras: the wounded general, brought before him on a stretcher, was reproached with having violated the laws of war by persisting in the defence of an untenable town when capitulation had been his bounden duty! The Spaniard made the proper answer, that any commander who surrenders before he is obliged is a traitor and a coward. Thereupon Suchet changed his tone, and offered him tempting conditions if he would take service under King Joseph. This proposal being answered as it deserved, Contreras was sent as a prisoner to the castle of Bouillon, from which he escaped after a captivity of fifteen months in October 1812[1].

[1] Interesting details of his perilous escape, in company with a French royalist officer, Bouvet de Lozier, and of his final arrival in England, may be found in his *Narrative*, written in 1813.

SECTION XXVIII: CHAPTER III

THE FALL OF FIGUERAS AND THE AUTUMN CAMPAIGN IN CATALONIA. AUGUST 1811

THE news of the fall of Tarragona, brought by the fugitive General Velasco, came as a thunderclap to Campoverde and his 'army of succour.' While the Captain-General had been hesitating, marching and countermarching, and sending about for further reinforcements, the great city entrusted to him had fallen. It was impossible for the simplest soldier in his ranks to fail to see that the whole responsibility for its loss lay with Campoverde, and from that moment his authority ceased, and officers and men alike began to clamour for his resignation. His former popularity in Catalonia had, most deservedly, vanished. The newly raised recruits began to melt away from their colours; the *somatenes* refused to serve one whom they regarded as a coward, if not as a traitor. On the news that a French column had started from Tarragona to attack him, Campoverde abandoned his head quarters at Vendrils, and fled inland to Cervera, where he at last thought himself safe for the moment. His departure exposed the dépôt at Villanueva de Sitjes, where his sea-borne stores were lying, and the French seized it on the 30th, making prize of many ships not ready for sailing, and capturing 800 Tarragona wounded in the hospital. Skerret's 1,200 British were lying off the place in their transports, just preparing to land and to join Campoverde, as he had desired. Finding that disembarkation was impossible, and that the Catalan army had disappeared, Skerret took his expedition back to Cadiz, after a most humiliating experience.

Meanwhile there was high debate at Cervera. The Valencian general, Miranda, demanded that Campoverde should at once dismiss him and his division, and permit them to return home by sea. They had been lent by Charles O'Donnell for the one purpose of the relief of Tarragona; and that operation being now impossible, for the best of reasons, Miranda claimed leave

to depart. He was naturally anxious to serve no longer under such a miserable chief as Campoverde—though his own behaviour on June 24th gave him no right to complain. It was hard to see how his request could be refused, yet many of the chiefs of the Catalan army thought that the departure of the Valencian division implied the end of all formal war in the principality. The proposal to remove not only the Valencians but all the regular troops was raised: Campoverde, feeling his authority gone, and willing to throw all responsibility on his lieutenants, called a council of war on July 1st. By a majority of four to three general officers, the meeting decided in favour of abandoning Catalonia altogether. Sarsfield, the fighting-man of the army, gave a furious negative, and Campoverde himself made a more timid objection to the move[1]. But the retreat to Valencia being once voted, the Captain-General was only too glad to fall in with the project, and to be quit of the duties which he had so ill discharged. All the regulars were to sail when a convenient exit to the sea could be found—at the moment of the council of war Suchet was on the move in the neighbourhood of Barcelona, and the small ports usually available were blocked. It was a miserable resolve, when Figueras was still holding out, when the inland was still intact, and when Suchet had been obliged to disperse his troops, and could obviously make no general move for some weeks. Fortunately difficulties cropped up to prevent the evacuation. The British commodore, Codrington, when asked to prepare transports and convoy, replied 'that although he would strain any point to restore to General O'Donnell and to Valencia the troops so liberally furnished by that kingdom, he would not embark the Marquis of Campoverde, or any of the troops belonging to Catalonia, which it was his duty to assist in defending, instead of depriving it of that protection which it had[2].' Eroles,

[1] For the wording of the votes see the précis of the council of war in the Appendix to Arteche, vol. x. pp. 550–2. Caro, San Juan, Velasco, and Carrasquedo voted for embarkation: Sarsfield, Santa Cruz, and Campoverde for holding on in Catalonia. Miranda would not vote, 'not considering himself as belonging to the Catalan army,' but was in favour of the evacuation. Eroles was absent.

[2] Letter of Codrington, in his *Life*, i. p. 235.

Manso, and other local Catalan officers sent in equally strong protests; they would be glad to be rid of the Captain-General, but it would be treason to withdraw the whole regular army, and to leave the principality to be defended by the miqueletes alone. The spirit of the people would be brought low, and resistance would die down when they knew that they were abandoned for ever by the army.

Meanwhile Suchet had spent the days while the Spaniards were debating in opening up the communications between his own army and Barcelona, which had so long been out of touch. He marched with the greater part of the divisions of Harispe and Frère, as has already been mentioned, to Villafranca and Villanueva de Sitjes, where he left the bulk of his troops, then by the pass of Ordal to Barcelona itself. Here General Maurice Mathieu was in a very isolated position, for since Macdonald had taken off all the disposable troops to the siege of Figueras, the city had been entirely cut off from him, the *somatenes* having intercepted the road, while English cruisers maintained a fairly effective blockade on the side of the sea. Suchet concerted with the governor a plan for opening up communication with Macdonald, and occupying the port of Mataro, north of Barcelona, where the Spaniards still had an access to the sea. He determined to bring up Harispe and Frère, and went back to pick them up. This he did, and returned with them to Barcelona on July 9th, while an expedition sent out by Maurice Mathieu seized Mataro.

But meanwhile Campoverde, reflecting that if the little ports between Tarragona and Barcelona were blocked to him, there still remained those between Barcelona and Rosas, had made a rapid march through the inland, and had arrived at Arens de Mar, north of Mataro, before Suchet returned to Barcelona. The bulk of Miranda's division was safely shipped off on July 9th by Codrington, and transported to Valencia[1]. But the cavalry, refusing to abandon their horses, had turned westward, under a Colonel Gasca, and to the number of some 900 saved them-

[1] Codrington says that he only embarked 2,400 men out of the 4,000 who had come to Catalonia. The cavalry had gone another way, and 600 or 800 men had deserted, some to join the *somatenes*, others to find their way home to Valencia as best they could.

selves by a most extraordinary march. Striking across northern Aragon, and dodging between the French garrisons, they reached the Upper Ebro near Tudela, where they forded the great river by the aid of guides lent them by the great guerrillero Mina. Once on the south bank, they executed another equally dangerous march, evading many French detachments, and rejoined Charles O'Donnell in the end of August, having travelled in six weeks no less than 740 miles, through the heart of a region which was supposed to be in military occupation by the enemy. Their loss was only four officers and fifty-three men, though 213 horses had perished in the mountains. This achievement sufficiently shows the superficial nature of Suchet's occupation of Aragon: he could not prevent so large a body as 900 men from crossing it twice from end to end.

Campoverde, after shipping off Miranda's infantry at Arens de Mar, had retired inland to Vich, where on the evening after the embarkation his disastrous captain-generalship came to an end. For he found waiting him there General Luis Lacy, sent by the Cadiz regency to relieve him in command. The new chief was a stranger to Catalonia, and the people would have preferred Eroles to lead them—indeed, a junta of Catalan officers had already offered to put themselves under his orders[1]. But Eroles, the most honourable of all the local leaders, refused to commit an act of indiscipline, and Lacy was recognized as Captain-General, while Campoverde absconded hastily by sea. Rejecting all idea of evacuating the principality, Lacy drew back into the mountains with the mere wreck of an army which had been handed over to him—some 2,000 or 3,000 men—and established himself at Solsona, where the Junta of Catalonia also took refuge. In this place and the neighbouring hill-towns he began to reorganize his demoralized troops, and to gather in recruits and deserters. But he was far too weak to do anything for the long-enduring garrison of Figueras, which was still holding out, though nearing its last gasp.

[1] Apparently while the army was at Agramunt near Cervera, about July 4th. See Codrington's correspondence in his *Life*, i. 236, and in Napier's Appendix to vol. iii. p. 398. For testimonials to the honourable and patriotic conduct of Eroles throughout the campaign, see Codrington's letters, *passim*.

Suchet, after failing to prevent the embarkation of the Valencian division, had determined to spend some time in opening up free communication between Barcelona and Macdonald's army in front of Figueras, as also between Barcelona and his own base of operations at Lerida. He must set matters on a satisfactory footing in Catalonia, before undertaking the great invasion of Valencia, which the Emperor had assigned as his next task. The expedition towards Macdonald's rear was accomplished by Suchet himself with the divisions of Frère and Harispe. One column (Palombini's Italians) marched up the valley of the Tenes river, by Monbuy and Codinas, the other and larger column followed the Congost river. Neither met with opposition, and they joined at the defile of Centelles above Vich. That town was occupied on July 15th, and flying columns sent out from it to Ripol, Olot, and Castelsollit. By means of these detachments Suchet got into touch with Macdonald, who was found to be holding Figueras closely blocked, and to be in no need of help, for though his army was sickly, yet the besieged garrison was known to be in a desperate condition, and its surrender was expected to occur at any moment. Determining that Macdonald could shift for himself, and would be able to overrun all northern Catalonia when his army was set free from the siege, Suchet turned back from Vich, with the object of achieving his second aim, the clearing of the road from Barcelona to Lerida. This great route was safe for large detachments—indeed, Montmarie's brigade had marched along it almost unmolested ten days back. But it could not be used by convoys or small parties, so long as the Spaniards were in possession of the mountain of Montserrat, which overhangs it for many miles. This lofty peak, the projecting angle of one of the chief Catalan sierras, was the nearest point to Barcelona now in the hands of the patriots. It was occupied at this moment by Eroles and some 1,500 miqueletes, who continually made descents into the plain from their fastness. The Montserrat is a fantastic pile of rock, whose highest point reaches 4,000 feet above the sea-level; it is mainly composed of red slate, a geological formation which runs to precipices, and at first sight the enormous bulk—its circumference is fifteen miles—looks almost inaccessible. But several paths run up among its clefts, and on a platform

3,000 feet up lies the sanctuary of Our Lady of Montserrat, the oldest and formerly the richest sanctuary of Catalonia, with a great Renaissance church and a large monastery. Most of the monks had fled to Majorca with their treasure in 1808, and their empty home served as the head quarters of the local miqueletes, and the magazine of their munitions. For cargoes of arms and stores, run ashore on the central Catalan coast, were generally forwarded to Montserrat for distribution. The mountain was not regularly fortified, indeed it was too large for fortification, but there were two batteries with ten guns placed across the only practicable road which led up to the sanctuary from the north, and the buildings themselves, far above, had been loopholed and barricaded. Nothing save its own steepness protected a minor path which climbs to the monastery from the village of Colbato. Another from Monistrol, which lies in the plain to the north-west, had been blasted away in places. The aspect of the peak was formidable, but its strength was more apparent than real, when it was held by no more than 1,500 irregular troops: for over and above the known paths there were many places where lightly equipped men could scramble, over slopes which were only precipitous in certain sections. When a very large force delivered a concentric attack on the mountain, it was impossible for the small garrison to block every possible point up which active assailants might make their way.

Suchet had brought up more than 10,000 men for the attack, including a battalion or two borrowed from the garrison of Barcelona. Abbé's brigade was to make the main assault along the road: Montmarie's brigade, now returned from Lerida, was to menace the steep path from Colbato to the summit; Harispe and Frère, lower down towards the plain, watched the Igualada and Manresa roads, the Barcelona troops the road to the south by Bruch. On July 25th the assault was delivered by Abbé's five battalions: they were scarcely opposed on the lower slopes, but met with a fierce resistance at the first battery, near the chapel of Saint Cecilia, 1,200 yards from the monastery. Here the column halted, to throw out swarms of skirmishers over the precipitous hillside. Some of them climbed high enough to bring an enfilading fire to bear on the Spanish guns, and as their discharge began to slacken, the grenadier companies charged up

the road and captured them. The miqueletes fell back on the second battery, which was presently captured in the same fashion by the combination of a flanking fire and a frontal attack. The Spanish gunners, the only regulars present, stood to their guns to the last in the most gallant way, and were nearly all bayoneted. Abbé was rearranging his column for an attack on the fortified monastery above, when furious firing was heard to break out in its direction, and the garrison were presently seen streaming down the hillside to the east. A large body of the French skirmishers, thrown out for the first attack, had found their way over the rocks to the back of the sanctuary, where there are rough tracks leading to some hermitages which lie out far from the main buildings. When some 300 men had collected behind the monastery, they delivered an attack on it from the rear. The small reserve placed in the buildings was panic-stricken by an attack from this side—all the more so because they saw the rest of their comrades recoiling from the batteries below, which had already been taken. They fled, after making no great stand, and, joining the main body, rushed down the precipitous ravines on the east front of the peak, where a few perished by falls, but the majority got away safely over ground where the victors could not follow. So fell Montserrat, with a loss of only 200 men to the French and 400 to the Spaniards. The storming of the holy mountain was a picturesque rather than a really difficult achievement, but the blow inflicted on the Catalans was a very severe one: Montserrat had been looked upon as impregnable, and the protection of its patroness was supposed to have defended it for the three years during which the French had been holding Barcelona, which lies so close to its foot. The Spaniards had now no post left on the great road from Barcelona to Lerida, and Suchet disposed part of his army to hold this line, Palombini's Italian brigade being left on Montserrat, while Frère's division lay at Igualada, and two cavalry and one infantry regiments held Cervera and its neighbourhood (the 'Llano de Urgel' or flat land of western Catalonia) as far as the gates of Lerida. Abbé's brigade went off southward, to join Musnier's division (to which it belonged) on the lower Ebro.

With the fall of Montserrat ended Suchet's Catalan cam-

paign. He had subdued all that part of the principality which had been made over to him, when Napoleon broke up the old 7th Corps and assigned the districts of Lerida, Tortosa, and Tarragona to the Army of Aragon. He had now before him the long-projected invasion of Valencia, and intended to take it in hand, so soon as the brigades escorting the Tarragona prisoners should have returned to Saragossa, and the southern regions of Aragon should have been cleared of the insurgents, who had flocked down into them from the hills when Abbé's brigade had been withdrawn to the north in June. For during the siege of Tarragona Villacampa had invested Teruel, in which a French battalion was shut up, Duran had attacked Calatayud, though without success, and a partisan named Campillo had raided as far as Cariñena, only thirty miles from Saragossa. During the month of August, when Suchet was able to dispose of the troops set free from Catalonia, flying columns under Harispe, Compère, and Peyri scoured all southern Aragon. Teruel was relieved, and Villacampa and his lieutenants were driven back into their old fastnesses in the sierras of Albaracin and Molina, the remotest recesses of the rugged land where Aragon and New Castile meet. But the Valencian expedition could not be taken in hand before the month of September had begun.

Meanwhile the siege of Figueras had lingered on for a month longer than Macdonald and Suchet had expected. The brigadier Martinez, with his five small regular battalions[1] and his 3,000 miqueletes, had made a most admirable defence. No assistance, not even any prospect of assistance, had been before them since Campoverde's defeat on May 3rd. The whole field army of Catalonia had been drawn away to defend or relieve Tarragona, and Martinez had no friends near him save the *somatenes* of the Ampurdam and the Pyrenean valleys, who were willing, but weak and disorganized. Their most popular chief, the fighting priest Rovira, had gone off to Cadiz to ask for succour, but found there that Tarragona was rightly considered a far more important place to save, and that there was no hope for Figueras. All that the *somatenes* could do was to molest Macdonald's

[1] One of Ultonia, two of Antequera, 1st and 2nd of the Voluntarios de Valencia.

convoys and foraging parties. May, June, and July wore slowly away, and Martinez was still holding out, with a garrison reduced to half-rations. Yet he was doing good service, since he was detaining in front of him the whole of the disposable troops of the 7th Corps, not to speak of some battalions of National Guards from the southern departments of France. No help from Macdonald could come to Suchet during the whole of the siege of Tarragona, or the subsequent operations about Montserrat. Instead it was Suchet who was forced to help Macdonald, by clearing his rear by the march to Vich.

The Duke of Tarentum had completed a great circumvallation around the rocky fortress of San Fernando, and had pushed forward batteries to within 500 yards of its walls, but he never attempted to breach them, or to storm the place. It is hard to make out why he made no such endeavour, for though the place is high lying and difficult of approach, it is not more so than the upper city of Tarragona, with which Suchet was dealing in such a prompt and drastic fashion. But from March to August Figueras was blockaded rather than besieged. Macdonald's proceedings are all the more difficult to understand because his army was suffering severely from the heat during June and July—the National Guards and the newly arrived battalions from the interior of France were thinned by malarial fevers, and by pestilence bred by long tarrying in unsanitary camps. Probably we must ascribe his refusal to open trenches and proceed to battering-work and assault, to his memory of what had happened at Gerona. The 7th Corps had an evil tradition of the repeated failures to storm that city, and of the loss of life which had accompanied them. Figueras, it was clear, must fall sooner or later from starvation; there was no chance that it could be relieved; was it worth while to waste good soldiers in taking by force a place that must yield in a week or two for want of provisions? Macdonald evidently under-estimated the obstinacy of the defenders and the amount of their stores, and may have regretted in July that he had not started a regular siege in May. But it was now too late to begin it, since surrender was inevitable within a few days, as he supposed. Evidence of the distressed state of the garrison was forthcoming on July 17th, when Martinez turned out of the fortress, without

any demand for exchange, 850 French and Italian prisoners who had been confined in the bomb-proofs since the commencement of the siege; they were in a half-starved condition, and reported that for some days they had hardly received any food at all[1]. General Guillot and the officers were not released—they were useful hostages, since their lives were at the disposition of the governor, in case the French should threaten to refuse quarter to irregulars, or make other harsh demands when the inevitable surrender should draw nearer.

The expectation that Martinez would hoist the white flag within a few days of the release of the prisoners was entirely falsified. He held out, suffering terrible privations, for another month; he was aware that Tarragona had fallen, that Campoverde's army had gone to pieces, and that he had no hope of succour. But he rightly considered that it was his duty to detain the 7th Corps before his walls to the last possible moment. Meanwhile he kept up the spirits of his garrison as best he could, by assuring them that it was well within their power to break out through the adversary's lines by a general sortie, when the last rations should have been issued. By August 16th this moment had arrived: the Spaniards had eaten not only the few horses in the place, but the dogs and rats[2]: only three days' half-rations were left. The plan for the evasion was well designed: in the afternoon Rovira, who had returned with empty hands from Cadiz, showed himself on the hills nearest to Figueras with some 2,000 *somatenes*—all that could be collected; he made roving demonstrations against the north side of the French circumvallation, in the hope of drawing the reserves in that direction, but allowed himself to be driven away without serious resistance. After dark, however, Martinez sallied from the fortress on the opposite side—the south-west—in the direction of the sea, hoping to find the line thin on that front. He had brought with him every man who could march, and dashed

[1] See Vacani, v. p. 313. It will be remembered that when Masséna was in a similar position at Genoa in 1800, he refused to dismiss his Austrian prisoners, and allowed many hundreds of them to die of starvation. Martinez was more merciful.

[2] 'Hasta los insectos más immundos' as Martinez wrote to the Catalan Junta.

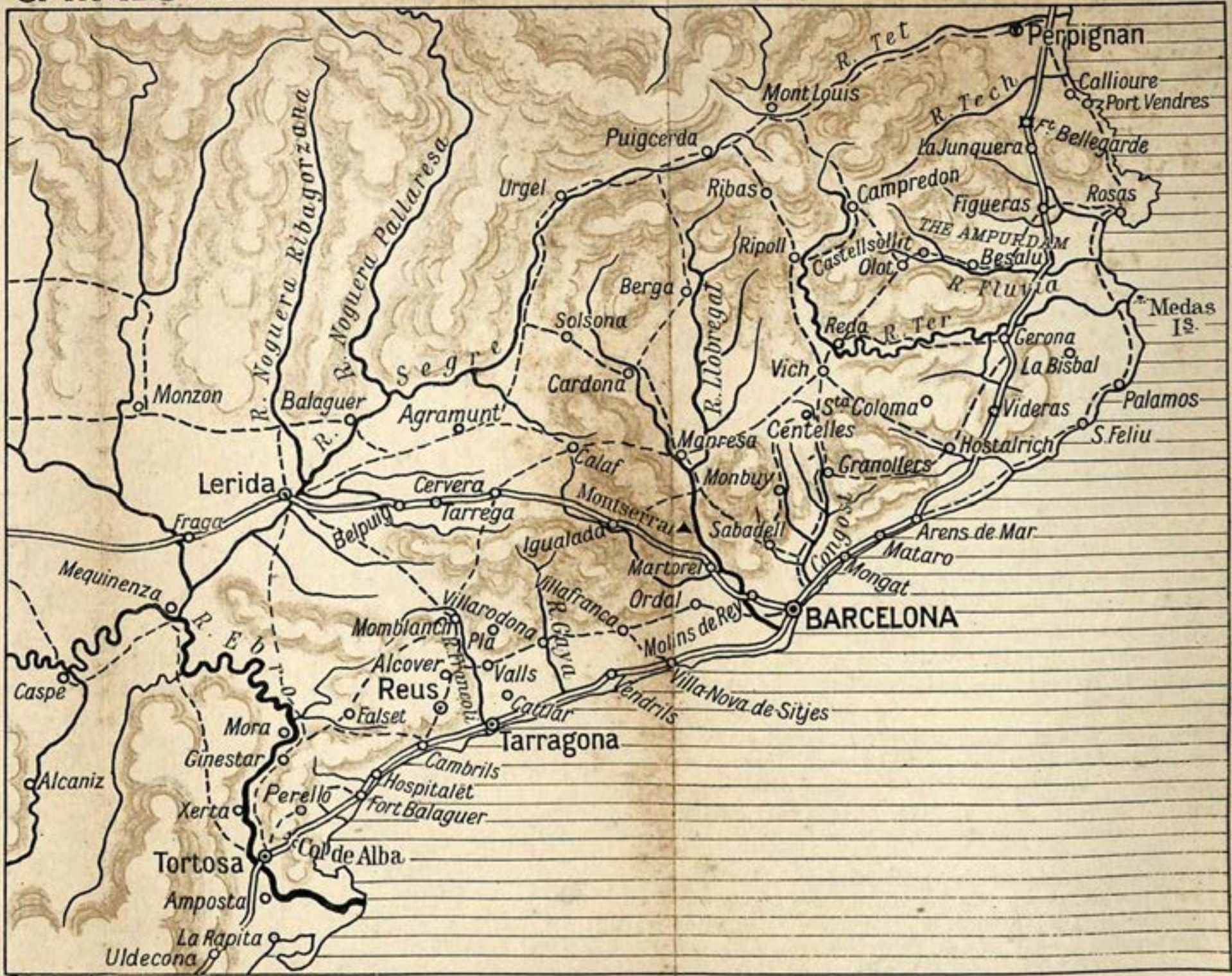
at the circumvallation in one broad column. The hostile pickets and outposts were rolled in, but the Spaniards were brought up against an impassable *abattis*, while two batteries on each side began playing against the flanks of the mass. After vainly trying to break through for some minutes, they recoiled into the fortress, leaving 400 dead and wounded behind them.

Next morning (August 17th) General Baraguay d'Hilliers, judging that the enemy must now be thoroughly disheartened, sent in a *parlementaire* to propose capitulation. Martinez, aware that his last bolt was shot, agreed to surrender on the third day, that following the issue of the last half-ration in his stores. The garrison crawled out and laid down its arms on the 19th: it mustered something over 2,000 men still able to stand, and there were another 1,000 in the hospitals. From first to last some 1,500 more had perished during the four months and nine days that the siege had lasted. The French had suffered almost as heavily—4,000 men had died in the lines since March, many more from fever and dysentery than from shot and shell. Macdonald sought eagerly among the prisoners for the three young Catalans who had let their compatriots into San Fernando. The two brothers Pons had escaped with Eroles in June [1], but the third, Juan Marquez, was found, and hanged on a high gallows on the ravelin of the fortress.

Thus ended in disaster the story of Figueras. But both the capture of the place and its defence form a most honourable page in the history of the war. Rovira's enterprise in seizing it and Martinez's obstinacy in maintaining it, long after all hope was gone, were equally praiseworthy. Though nothing came of the exploit in the end, they had immobilized the whole French 7th Corps for the entire summer of 1811, and had prevented Macdonald from giving a single battalion to help Suchet's attack on Tarragona. If Campoverde had possessed the most ordinary capacity or resolution, he might have turned the opportunity given him by the *somatene* chiefs to such good account as to wreck all the campaign planned by Napoleon for the subjection

[1] They both became officers in the Catalan army, and survived for many years after the war; the elder died, a retired brigadier-general, in the year 1850. See Arteche, x. 480. Vacani and Napier err in saying that he was hanged with Marquez, who was his cousin.

CATALONIA


Perpignan
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Fr. Bellegarde
La Junquera
Puigcerda
Urgel
Ribas
Campredon
Figueras
Rosas
THE AMPURDAM
Ripoll
Castellsollit
Olot
Besalu
R. Fluvia
Berga
R. Llobregat
Medas Is.
Reda
R. Ter
Gerona
La Bisbal
Solsona
R. Noguera Ribagorzana
R. Noguera Pallaresa
Segre
Vich
Cardona
Monzon
Balaguer
Agramunt
R.
Sta Coloma
Videras
Palamos
S. Feliu
Centelles
Manresa
Hostalrich
Calaf
Granollers
Lerida
Monbuy
Cervera
Montserrat
Tarrega
Fraga
Belpuig
Sabadell
Igualada
Arens de Mar
Mataro
Mongat
Martorel
Mequinenza
Villafranca
Ordal
BARCELONA
Villarodona
R. Gaya
Molins de Rey
Mombiancli
Pla
R. E b r o
Alcover
Valls
Reus
Villa-Nova de Sitjes
Vendrils
Caspe
Falset
Catllar
Mora
Tarragona
Ginestar
Cambrils
Alcaniz
Hospitalet
Perello
Fort Balaguer
Xerta
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Amposta
La Rapita
Uldecona
B.V. Barbishire, Oxford, 1911
SCALE 10 0 10 20 30 40 50 ENGLISH MILES

of Catalonia. Better management on May 3rd might have led to the defeat of Baraguay d'Hilliers, and if he had been driven off from Figueras, and isolated from Macdonald, who was then far away at Barcelona, Suchet would have had to march to the help of his comrades, and the siege of Tarragona could never have begun. We are brought back to the point which has already so often confronted us—Campoverde's miserable inefficiency was the final cause of all the disasters of 1811 in the principality of which he was the Captain-General.

Two such blows as the fall of Tarragona and the recapture of Figueras seemed to render inevitable the final subjection of Catalonia. It is with astonishment that we find that its obstinate people maintained their resistance for two years more, and were found still defending themselves when the war came to an end with the abdication of Napoleon in 1814. The new Captain-General, Lacy, was a man harsh and unpopular, but he had at least the merit of energy. His army was a mere wreck, but he issued orders for a general levy of all men between 18 and 40 to fill the depleted cadres of the few surviving regular battalions, and despite the ill-will of the Junta—who wished to lean more on the miqueletes, and distrusted the old army—he gradually collected a new force. Early in August, as if in bravado, he burst into France on the side of Puigcerda, and executed a destructive raid along the valleys of Cerdagne. If he was not strong enough to help Figueras, or to oppose Suchet, he was at least determined to do all the harm that he could to the enemy. This incursion threw Napoleon into a fit of rage, and, forgetting his own orders to Suchet which prescribed the invasion of Valencia as the next decisive move in the war, he wrote him an angry dispatch on August 22nd [1], in which he told the newly appointed Marshal that he ought to have left a strong French division at Vich, and to have marched with his main body against the Catalonian inland, aiming at Cardona and Urgel and the other unsubdued places. 'He should have profited by the panic into which the Spaniards had been thrown, and might have terminated the war in the province, while by making his retrogression to Saragossa he has given the enemy

[1] *Correspondance*, vol. xxii, no. 18,066.

the chance of rallying on all sides.' It is sufficient answer to this accusation to say that, if the Marshal had thrown all his available troops into the Catalan mountains, he would have become involved in a series of endless marches and countermarches after an intangible enemy, which would have prevented him from carrying out in the autumn his great and successful attack on Valencia. The strength of the Catalan resistance did not lie in the possession of Cardona or Urgel or any other old-fashioned stronghold, but in the determination of its people not to lay down their arms. There is no probability that the war could have been 'terminated' in the way that the Emperor hoped.

By September Lacy had reorganized the remnants of the old Army of Catalonia into three weak divisions under Eroles, Milans, and Sarsfield, each containing only four or five battalions. Every one of the new units represented many lost corps—the single regiment of Baza included all the remnants of the Granadan division, which Reding had brought to Catalonia in 1809 fourteen thousand strong. The new Cazadores de Cataluña raised by the well-known miquelete-chief Manso were formed from the *cadres* of six old Catalonian tercios [1]—it was the same with the regiments bearing the local names of Manresa, Mataro, and Ausona. The cavalry, consisting of the few hundred Catalonian horse who had but joined in Gasca's retreat to Valencia, amounted to five squadrons of hussars and cuirassiers. The whole, including garrisons, may have made up 8,000 men—all that was left of the 25,000 organized troops which had formed the '1st Army' on December 1st, 1810. But there still remained an Army of Catalonia, and as Macdonald and Maurice Mathieu and Decaen were to find, the Catalans were still ready to fight.

When the enemy was under the delusion that with the fall of Montserrat and Figueras the back of the resistance of the Principality had been broken, Lacy began to take the offensive. On September 11–12, aided by English ships, he drove the

[1] An interesting study of the reorganization of the Catalan army in August–September 1811 is given in Estallela's *El Batallon de Hostalrich* (Madrid, 1909), an account of the fortunes of Manso's new *Cazadores de Cataluña* in 1811–14.

French out of the Medas Islands, at the mouth of the Ter, and built on the largest of them a fort which gave him a secure point of communication with the Mediterranean Squadron. But this was a side-issue: in October he accomplished something far more important. Descending on the line of garrisons by which the French kept open the road from Barcelona to Lerida, he took 200 men at Igualada on October 4, captured a large convoy near Cervera three days later, and on October 11 took that town with 645 prisoners, and the neighbouring Belpuig with 150 more on October 14. The chain of forts was broken, and to the intense joy of all Catalonia the French dismantled the monastery of Montserrat and evacuated the Holy Mountain. Half of Suchet's work in the summer had been undone. A few days later Macdonald was recalled to Paris (October 28); he was the third marshal whose reputation got no profit from his Catalonian campaign—his failure was as bad as that of Augereau, and he had not even got the small credit that St. Cyr won in battle. The command of the 7th Corps fell to General Decaen.

SECTION XXIX

WELLINGTON'S AUTUMN CAMPAIGN OF 1811

CHAPTER I

WELLINGTON'S BLOCKADE OF CIUDAD RODRIGO. AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 1811

When Marmont, before the end of the second week of July, had taken his departure from the valley of the Guadiana, and had begun to disperse his army in cantonments on both sides of the Tagus, Wellington was able to review his own situation at leisure, and to think out a new plan of operations. The Army of Portugal had settled down in a central position, from which it could transfer itself with equal facility to reinforce the 5th Corps in Estremadura, if the Allies should make another move against Badajoz, or the troops of Dorsenne in the kingdom of Leon, if any attempt were made to strike at Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca. Marmont had placed one division (Foy's) and a cavalry brigade at Truxillo, to keep up the communication across the mountains with the 5th Corps. He had established his own head quarters at Navalmoral, near Almaraz, and had three divisions[1] in his immediate neighbourhood along the Tagus. The remaining two, which completed his army, were placed, one at Plasencia, the other in the province of Avila[2], somewhat more to the north, so as to command the passes into the kingdom of Leon, by which the army would have to move to join the Army of the North, supposing that Wellington took the offensive on the Agueda and the Tormes. In this position the Marshal remained, in an expectant attitude, for some ten weeks. The period of repose was very grateful to him, since he had taken his army to the relief of Badajoz in haste, before it was fully reorganized, and

[1] These divisions were those of Maucune, Sarrut, and Ferey.

[2] Clausel's division in the province of Avila, Brennier at Plasencia.

was anxiously expecting the arrival of the drafts and convalescents whom he had left behind him, and—what was still more important—a great supply of remounts to strengthen his depleted cavalry, and of gun teams to bring his batteries up to the total of eighty pieces, which had been prescribed by the Emperor as his proper complement. He was aware that orders had been issued from Paris that the Army of the North was to make over to him 500 artillery horses, and that nearly a thousand cavalry were coming from Bayonne, whither the 3rd and 4th squadrons of each of his dragoon regiments had been sent back in May to pick up new chargers. General Vandermaesen, as he was informed by a dispatch from Berthier dated July 10th, was to be at Burgos by August 15th, with 850 remounted dragoons, 1,100 artillery horses, and 6,000 drafts and recruits for the infantry. But, as so often happened in Spain, this great reinforcement had not turned up even by the middle of September; for though the troops had started from Bayonne, great numbers of them were detained on the way, not only by Dorsenne, but by mere post-commanders and chiefs of small garrisons, who presumed to lay hands on them because they thought themselves threatened by some movement of the Navarrese or Cantabrian guerrilleros[1]. Vandermaesen got to Burgos, but could not collect more than half of the column which he was directed to take to the Army of Portugal, and so did not start. The divisions in the field received no appreciable reinforcements till September was far advanced. Meanwhile Marmont used the troops which lay immediately round his head quarters to construct an important group of permanent fortifications about Almaraz, the chief passage of the Tagus. The flying-bridge there was replaced by a strong bridge of boats, protected at each end by a closed work, partly in stone, partly in earth; the one was called Fort Ragusa, the other Fort Napoleon. In addition, the defile in the mountains, by which the road descends on to Almaraz, was protected by a third structure called Fort Mirabete, from the neighbouring village. This group of works gave the French

[1] For an interesting account of the experiences of an officer sent to scrape together drafts and convalescents despite of the petty governors, see the diary of Sprünglin, pp. 484-5. He had special difficulties with Thiébault, the Governor of Salamanca.

a stronger hold on the central Tagus than they had ever possessed before, and the permanent bridge was invaluable, since it permitted troops to go south or north at a much greater rate than had been possible when, as hitherto, they had to be ferried over on a mere pontoon worked with ropes. Orders came from Paris that a similar passage, protected by a fortified post, was to be established at Alcantara, sixty miles further down the river, where the broken Roman bridge[1] invited repair. But this was quite beyond Marmont's power—the position was far too near the Portuguese border to be maintained save by a large garrison, which would have required revictualling at frequent intervals, for the neighbouring region, always desolate, was now absolutely depeopled. When Wellington had large bodies of troops at Castello Branco and Portalegre, while there was no solid force of the Army of Portugal nearer than Navalmoral, it would have been too risky to expose a detachment at Alcantara. The ruined remains of the mediaeval fortress there, which had been knocked to pieces in the old War of the Spanish Succession, could not have been patched up so as to resist artillery of the lightest sort.

Marmont had the greatest difficulty in maintaining his army in the region which it now occupied. The western part of the kingdom of New Castile was (as Wellington had found in the Talavera campaign) almost incapable of feeding a large force. The Vera of Plasencia was the only district which sufficed for itself even in time of peace. Normally food would have been drawn from the direction of Toledo, Aranjuez, and Madrid. But this district was in the occupation of the Army of the Centre, and King Joseph protested in the most lively fashion at being expected to furnish all the supplies for Marmont's force, over which he was denied control, and with which he seems to have felt himself little concerned[2]. New Castile barely sufficed for his own needs, and when an Imperial decree proclaimed that the districts of Toledo, Avila, and Talavera were removed from his sphere of command and placed at the disposition of the Army of Portugal, he considered that his brother had broken the

[1] Correspondence from Berthier printed in Marmont's *Autobiography*, iv. p. 122.

[2] See Joseph to Marmont in the correspondence of the latter, iv. pp. 150–6.

pledges which had been made to him during his short visit to Paris, for in this bargain it had been stipulated [1] that armies entering his sphere of activity came under his command. Before evacuating the ceded districts, he withdrew all the movable stores and munitions; Marmont declares that at Toledo the royal officials sold all the corn in the magazines to private persons, just before the arrival of his own commissaries, and handed over empty vaults to the new-comers [2].

Even with the resources of the provinces of Avila and Toledo at its disposition, the Army of Portugal only lived from hand to mouth, and was unable to accumulate magazines of any importance. The transport of the food-stuffs was the great problem; the army had practically no vehicles left—as Marmont observed in one of his dispatches to Berthier, he had received over from Masséna about ten waggons only—all the rest that had belonged to the three corps that had marched into Portugal had been left behind on the mountain roads between Santarem and Sabugal in March [3]. Country carts might have been requisitioned in the valley of the Tagus at an early stage of the war, but by 1811 they had entirely disappeared, along with the oxen that had drawn them. The population had mostly vanished, and the fraction that remained was in a condition of abject misery from Talavera as far as the Portuguese border. Marmont calls the country from Almaraz to Merida 'a horrible wilderness [4].' He calculated that the whole of the Avila–Plasencia–Talavera region could barely feed 15,000 men, and that the rest of his army only subsisted by drawing on the comparatively intact Toledo district.

Of all this trouble on the part of his immediate adversary Wellington was aware, through intercepted dispatches, as well as through the reports sent in to him by the Spaniards. And the facts that Marmont had been forced to disperse his army into cantonments extending from Truxillo to Avila, and had no magazines of any size, formed important data in his calcula-

[1] See above, p. 219.

[2] Marmont's *Mémoires*, iv. p. 58.

[3] Intercepted dispatch from Marmont to Berthier of August 5th, printed in *Supplementary Wellington Dispatches*, xiii. p. 690.

[4] *Mémoires*, iv. p. 55.

tions. It would clearly take many days to assemble the whole Army of Portugal—whether it were required on the Guadiana or on the Tormes. At the same time Marmont, by his march in June to join Soult, had shown himself a general of energy and decision, and it must be taken for granted that, if there was good reason for him to move, he would do so, as quickly as the difficulties of supply would permit him. His force, which Wellington very accurately calculated at about 30,000 infantry and 3,500 horse, or some 36,000 men of all arms[1], was the central fact in all future operations. Clearly it would be moved south or north whenever necessary.

As to Soult, he had now so much on his hands in Andalusia that he was not to be feared for the present. It was known that he had left nothing in Estremadura save the 5th Corps, now under Drouet, and five or six regiments of dragoons. The troops drawn from Cordova and Granada had been taken back to Andalusia. But two divisions were hunting Blake and Ballasteros in the Condado de Niebla. The disposable remainder must be very small. Soult therefore might be neglected as an enemy capable of taking the offensive. If, however, the Anglo-Portuguese army were to invade Andalusia, an operation which some of Wellington's subordinates had suggested to him as a possibility[2], the Duke of Dalmatia would certainly raise the siege of Cadiz, probably abandon Granada, and march against the Allies with a force which, including the 5th Corps, would be 60,000 strong. Wherefore offensive action in this quarter could not be thought of[3], all the more so because Marmont, if nothing was left opposite him on the Tagus, might come down by Merida, threaten Elvas and Abrantes, and perhaps take the Allies in the rear after they had crossed the Sierra Morena.

Nor was the idea of renewing the siege of Badajoz, during Soult's absence, tempting. The place could certainly be beset;

[1] See Wellington to Lord Liverpool, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 115.

[2] D'Urban in his diary often harps upon this project.

[3] 'We should meet in Andalusia the whole force which lately obliged us to raise the siege of Badajoz, with the addition to it of the force which was left before Cadiz. . . . An attempt to relieve Cadiz would certainly not succeed.' *Dispatches*, vii. p. 118.

but in ten days or so Marmont and the 12,000 men of the 5th Corps would have united to relieve it, and their joint force would be nearly equal in total numbers to the Anglo-Portuguese and superior to them in cavalry. 'Any success which we might derive from a general action, to which I might bring the Army of Portugal and the 5th Corps, would not be very decisive; on the other hand the loss which we would sustain by the heat of the weather, and by the length of the marches which we should be obliged to make would be very great[1].' But the main objection to a renewal of the siege of Badajoz was not the prospect of a pitched battle, but the impossibility of sitting down to a leaguer in the valley of the Guadiana at a time when it was known to be absolutely pestilential. Already on the Caya the army had begun to suffer from the well-known Guadiana fever, and its spread had only been stopped by moving the troops back to the healthy towns in the highlands.

Wellington therefore ruled out of the list of possible operations any movement to the south of the Tagus. There remained only the chance of making another attempt on Ciudad Rodrigo, and from the end of July onward this was the project which was engrossing his attention. To make a move in this direction would certainly draw Marmont from the Tagus, and cause him to unite with the Army of the North for the relief of the fortress. But Wellington thought that he would prefer this combination among his enemies to the other one, which would ensue if he were to make his stroke in Estremadura. He gave three reasons to Lord Liverpool for the preference[2]: the first was that in a campaign on the frontiers of Leon he would have the assistance of all the militia of northern Portugal for subsidiary operations. The second was that the ground would be much more in his favour—he would have behind him not the broad plains of the Alemtejo, but the rugged spurs of the Serra da Estrella, where strong positions abounded, and where the numerous French cavalry would be as useless as they had proved during the campaign of Bussaco in the preceding year. The third advantage was that to draw Marmont into Leon separated

[1] From the same letter to Lord Liverpool, *Dispatches*, vii. 118.

[2] See the all-important dispatch of July 18, in which these three points are set forth. *Dispatches*, vii. 118.

him from Soult by the whole breadth of central Spain, and disconnected the operations of the two main French forces. For the Army of the North was a less formidable body than the Army of Andalusia, because it was scattered over an even greater extent of territory. Nor were its distractions less than those of Soult: the Galicians and Asturians, Longa, Porlier, and Mina, and all the guerrilleros of Old Castile, were in existence to keep this French force constantly harassed. In their way they were more effective as irritants than Blake, Ballasteros, and the Murcians had proved to be in the south.

Wellington was not at this moment, the end of July, aware that the Army of the North was about to receive reinforcements, which would make it far more formidable in the autumn. He could not yet know that the divisions of Souham, Reille, and Caffarelli were about to be thrown across the Pyrenees, and that the first of them would be in the front line during the operations of September. Even by August he was only aware in a vague fashion[1] that more French troops were expected at Vittoria from Bayonne, and supposed them to be about 10,000 or 11,000 strong[2], while they were really three full divisions of over 30,000 men. By the end of the month he was better informed—but by that time his operations had begun, and it was too late to make a change[3].

Even from the first, however, Wellington was disposed to believe that no great results would follow from a move against Ciudad Rodrigo. 'I am tempted to try this enterprise,' he wrote to Lord Liverpool before he had begun his march, 'but I beg your Lordship to observe that I may be obliged to abandon it. When the relative force of the two armies will be so nearly balanced as in this, and particularly in an operation in the Peninsula of Spain, it is impossible for me to foresee all the events which may lead to this result. But the arrival of reinforcements to the enemy, or further information, which may

[1] *Dispatches*, vii. 184: 'I should imagine that the reports have some foundation.' August 9th.

[2] *Dispatches*, vii. p. 194. August 14th.

[3] By August 21st he has heard that the 5th Léger and other new regiments from the interior of France are over the Pyrenees, *Dispatches*, vii. p. 215.

show them to be stronger than I now imagine, or a falling off in the strength of our army owing to sickness, would necessarily oblige me to abandon the enterprise[1].' Later comments are in the same cautious tone: on August 9 Wellington thinks it 'more than ever doubtful whether he will be in a situation to undertake the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo'—but the movement may afford an opportunity of striking an advantageous blow, and cause the enemy, at least, to draw off troops from corners of the Peninsula where they are badly wanted.

Long before the army began to move towards the Agueda and the frontiers of Leon, Wellington had given the preliminary order[2] which committed him to the project of attacking Rodrigo. He had at last received from England the heavy battering-train of siege artillery, which would have been invaluable in May for the breaching of Badajoz. It was on shipboard in Lisbon harbour. He directed it to be taken round by sea to Oporto, sent up the Douro in boats as far as Lamego—where lay the limit of river navigation—and then to be sent forward by detachments to Trancoso, in the northern Beira, where he intended to establish his base dépôt. Nearly 400 pairs of draught bullocks and about 900 country carts were to be collected at Lamego for the transport. The charge of the whole operation was given to Alexander Dickson, whose energetic management of the very inefficient siege artillery at Badajoz had inspired Wellington with a strong belief in his resourcefulness, and his power of getting the largest possible amount of work out of the Portuguese, military and civilians alike.

Dickson started at once for Oporto, where he found two companies of British artillery[3] which had been sent from Lisbon, and picked up somewhat later 300 Portuguese gunners, who were also placed at his disposition. With their aid he began shipping up to Lamego the guns and ammunition from the

[1] *Dispatches*, vii. 119, July 18th.

[2] It is contained in the 'Memorandum for Colonels Frampton and Fletcher' of 19th July, dated the day after the dispatch to Lord Liverpool which sets forth the whole project.

[3] Bredin's and Glubb's, which had long been lying at Lisbon without horses, and had taken no part in the field operations of 1810 and 1811. Holcumbe's battery was soon afterwards substituted for Glubb's. See Dickson's *Diary* (ed. Leslie) for months of August–October 1811.

transports. So long as the transport was by water, matters went slowly but easily, but the land voyage from Lamego onwards turned out a heart-rending business, from the badness of the roads and the difficulty of collecting cattle for draught. Dickson prevailed upon Wellington in the end to make Villa da Ponte, rather than Trancoso, his central dépôt—the town in the hills proving less convenient than the large village fifteen miles further north. All through August and September material was accumulating at Villa da Ponte, but it was never sent forward, because, as the campaign worked out, no regular siege of Ciudad Rodrigo ever became possible. Wellington would not show his battering-train until it was certain that he could turn it to good use, and kept it hidden far to the rear of his fighting-line. It was only gradually that part of it began to be moved up to Almeida, ostensibly to serve for the re-armament of that fortress, where the damage done by the two explosions carried out by Brennier and Pack had been repaired. It was not to be till December that the guns landed at Oporto in August were employed. But all through the autumn Wellington's movements were greatly influenced by the fact that he had now a large and efficient siege-train ready, in a position from which it could be sent forward the moment that a fair opportunity should offer itself. It was the existence of Dickson's park at Villa da Ponte, as much, or more, than any other factor in the situation, that kept Wellington on the frontiers of Leon watching for his chance. It would seem that his caution was justified—the French never quite realized that he was ready to attack Rodrigo in the most effective style, when they should give him the opportunity that he lacked, by dispersing their armies in a way which rendered rapid concentration impossible.

The march of the seven divisions which were destined for service on the Agueda and the Azava began in the first week of August. The Light Division and Arentschildt's cavalry, moving up from Castello Branco, were at Sabugal on the 8th and occupied Martiago, beyond the Agueda and close to Rodrigo, on the 10th. On the following day Wellington in person led a reconnaissance right up to the walls of the fortress, and drove in all the French outposts. The blockade was then established by the Light Division on the left bank of the Agueda, and the 3rd

Division on the right, the head quarters of the former being at Carpio, those of the latter at Martiago. The road north-eastward to Salamanca was only cut by means of cavalry posts and Julian Sanchez's guerrilla bands, and the infantry did not approach within some miles of Rodrigo. Wellington's purpose was merely to prevent the entry of provisions into the place: he had no intention of drawing close up to it and opening a siege, till he should have learnt that his battering-train should have reached Trancoso: and it would obviously be a matter of many weeks before the guns got up from Oporto. It might perhaps be argued that it would have been better not to demonstrate at all against Rodrigo, or to call the attention of Marmont and Dorsenne in this direction, till there was some possibility of opening siege-operations. For to famish the garrison must infallibly lead to a concentration of the enemy at Salamanca for its relief, and draw together a large army. Marmont was less dangerous in his scattered cantonments about the Tagus than with his forces massed on the Tormes. And there was little hope of reducing Rodrigo by famine alone; clearly the enemy would mass and fight, rather than allow it to fall unaided [1].

Meanwhile Wellington moved his head quarters to Fuente Guinaldo, sixteen miles south of Ciudad Rodrigo, on August 12th, and kept them there till September 24th. The divisions not engaged in the blockade were cantoned at various points to the rear. The first division lay about Penamacor: it was no longer commanded by Spencer, who had so long led it. He had gone home, ostensibly on sick leave, really because he was annoyed that General Graham had recently been ordered up from Cadiz, and was for the future to take charge of the whole left wing of the army whenever the Commander-in-Chief was absent. This responsibility had hitherto fallen to Spencer, and Wellington was not alone in thinking that he had not discharged it over well [2]. The arrival of Graham (August 8th) was welcomed by

[1] Wellington saw this clearly enough; he writes to Lord Liverpool on August 27: 'If we cannot maintain this blockade, the enemy must bring 50,000 men to raise it, and then they can undertake nothing else this year, for they must still continue to watch Rodrigo, and we shall so far save the cause. Meanwhile if they offer me a favourable opportunity of bringing any of them to action, I shall take it.' *Dispatches*, viii. p. 232.

[2] Mr. Fortescue sends me the subjoined note on Spencer from a sup-

all ranks, and for the future he assumed charge, nominally of the 1st Division, really of all the troops in the north which were not actually under the master's eye. At any rate Graham could never be accused of dullness of apprehension or indecision, the two charges habitually made against Spencer by Wellington himself, no less than by many diarists of the time.

Not far off from the 1st Division was the 4th, under Cole, at Pedrogão, twenty miles north-east from Castello Branco. The 5th Division, meanwhile, lay at Perales, Payo, and Navas Frias watching the passes of the Sierra de Gata, in case Marmont's division at Plasencia should make an unexpected forward movement towards Leon by the shortest route. The 7th Division was at Villar Mayor near Sabugal and Fuente Guinaldo. Lastly, the 6th Division, more to the left and forming the northernmost section of the army, was cantoned between the Coa and the lower Agueda, from Nava de Aver as far as the bridge of Barba del Puerco. Of the cavalry, Alten's brigade[1] was covering the Light and 3rd Divisions in front of Ciudad Rodrigo, while the others, De Grey's [2], Slade's [3], and Anson's [4] were

pressed letter of Wellington to Pole at Apsley House, not to be found in any of the editions of the *Dispatches*. 'The person who is now here as second in command is very unfit for his situation. He is a good executive officer, but has no mind, and is incapable of forming any opinions of his own. He is the centre of all the vulgar and foolish opinions of the day. Thus you are aware that, from former experiences, I cannot depend upon him for a moment, for anything. He gives his opinion upon every subject, changes it with the wind, and if any misfortune occurs, or the act recommended by him is disapproved of, there is no effort to be looked for from him.' This verdict does not much differ, save in strength of expression, from the opinion of minor contemporaries, such as Tomkinson and Stepney, e. g. 'Sir Brent Spencer, a zealous gallant officer, had no great military genius. He was anxious and fidgety when there was nothing to do, but once under fire looked like a philosopher solving a problem—perfectly cool and self-possessed.' (Stepney's *Leaves from a Diary of an Officer of the Guards*, p. 80.) See also in Stepney for notes as to Spencer's resentment at his supersession by Graham. This has value, as the diarist was a favourite of the general, who had offered to make him his aide-de-camp.

[1] 11th Light Dragoons and 1st Hussars K.G.L.

[2] 3rd Dragoon Guards and 4th Dragoons. Properly belonging to Erskine's cavalry division in the Alemtejo, but borrowed.

[3] 1st Royals and 12th Light Dragoons. [4] 14th and 16th Light Dragoons.

watching the frontier eastward from Castello Branco, with observing parties in the passes but the main bodies placed some way to the rear. The head quarters of the second brigade was at Soita near Sabugal, that of the last-named at Idanha Nova. These cantonments, it will be observed, were somewhat scattered, there being no less than eighty miles between Barba del Puerco in the north and Penamacor in the south, but Wellington calculated that he would always have long notice of any concentration of the enemy in his front, and three marches would suffice to unite the army on its centre, between Fuente Guinaldo and Alfayates, or four to concentrate it on a wing, if the French (a thing not very probable) should show signs of operating either south of the Sierra de Gata or on the lower Agueda.

It should be noted that about this time Wellington, for the first time since 1810, obtained the assistance of a Spanish force on the Beira frontier. General Castaños, busy in reorganizing the ruined Army of Estremadura, sent Carlos de España with the cadres of several infantry regiments to the frontier of Leon, to fill them up with recruits from the province of Salamanca. The rest of his troops, under Morillo and Penne Villemur[1], were kept in Estremadura and continued to co-operate with Hill. But Carlos de España fixed himself at Ledesma, where he joined hands with the great partisan Julian Sanchez, and soon collected some 3,000 men, who though useless for action, being raw and not properly furnished with uniforms or arms, yet served to hold a position in front of the lower Agueda, and gave much trouble to Thiébault, the governor of Salamanca, by their sallies and incursions into his district.

For some weeks after the arrival of the army on the Beira frontier there was little stirring. The fact that Ciudad Rodrigo had been cut off from communication with Salamanca did not at first provoke the French to action, for the place was in no immediate danger of starvation. A large convoy had been thrown into the place only two days before the blockade was formed, and it was known that the allied army had no siege-train in its company. Throughout the month of August Dorsenne was much more troubled by the operations of the Galicians than by Wellington's demonstration, while Marmont, knowing that

[1] For whose actions see section xxix. p. 597.

Rodrigo was provisioned up to October [1], saw no reason for moving till it should be drawing nearer to the end of its resources. It was only about the middle of September that he got tardy news that there was a siege-train making its way up from Oporto, and that the British divisions behind the Agueda were making gabions and fascines. He then was stimulated to activity, and concerted a junction with Dorsenne without further delay—of which more hereafter. In August he found full occupation in the organization of the provinces of New Castile, which the Emperor had handed over to him, and was more worried by the difficulty of raising taxes and collecting magazines, and by incessant wrangles with King Joseph's officials, than by military difficulties [2]. All that he did was to move his head quarters to the neighbourhood of Plasencia [3], and to shift some of the brigades cantoned along the Tagus to the north of that river, in view of the fact that a march to relieve and revictual Ciudad Rodrigo would ultimately become necessary. Foy's division was kept, however, at Truxillo—far to the south—till the middle of September, in order that touch might not be lost with Drouet and the Army of Andalusia. The Marshal, very rightly, scouted the idea, which some of his subordinates had formed, that Wellington's appearance on the Beira frontier might portend a dash at Salamanca [4]. To gain some further knowledge of the disposition of the Anglo-Portuguese he sent out several cavalry reconnaissances from Plasencia towards the Sierra de Gata. They found British outposts all along the passes, and could not get forward, though one party succeeded in capturing a picket of the 11th Light Dragoons at San Martin de Trebejos, near the Puerto de Perales, on August 14th.

The news that Marmont was shifting troops northward, towards the passes into the kingdom of Leon, induced Wellington to make a corresponding movement with his own troops, and on August 27th the 1st and 4th Divisions were ordered to prepare

[1] Marmont to Berthier, *Correspondance*, p. 165, in the 4th vol. p. 163 of his *Mémoires*.

[2] See all the August correspondence of 1811 in his *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 143-62.

[3] On August 26th according to his narrative, iv. p. 61.

[4] Ibid., p. 60.

to move from Penamacor and Pedrogão to the neighbourhood of Fuente Guinaldo, close to head quarters [1]. The notion that the Army of Portugal would, at some not very distant date, march to raise the blockade of Rodrigo, was made even more certain by the capture of a dispatch in cipher from Foy to Girard, warning him that he was under orders to follow Marmont across the Tagus and abandon Truxillo [2]. But Foy made no move for a fortnight more, and Wellington rightly concluded that he need be under no apprehension as to the concentration of the enemy, till he had received news that Truxillo had been evacuated. It was also clear that Marmont intended that Dorsenne should co-operate with him, and since that general, with all the disposable troops of the Army of the North, was beyond Astorga at the end of August, campaigning against the Galicians, there was no need to feel any alarm till this force should be known to have turned southward towards the Douro. On the third of September things began to look a little more exciting, when Dorsenne was reported to be starting from Astorga on his return journey: he made forced marches for Salamanca, where it was known that a convoy for the supply of Rodrigo was being organized [3]. But provisions were hard to collect in Leon, and Marmont had refused to begin his march of concentration till it should be certified to him that Dorsenne was nearly ready, and that the convoy had been got together.

Hence it was not till September 17th that the time of crisis began. On this day Wellington received the news that Foy had evacuated Truxillo on the 15th, and that Montbrun's cavalry was crossing the sierra by the Puerto de Baños, with infantry columns following in its rear. On the previous day an intercepted letter informed him that the Salamanca convoy was to be ready on September 21st [4]. If Dorsenne had stopped in front of the Galicians, or if Marmont had been moving with only part of his troops, Wellington would have prepared to fight a battle beyond the Agueda. But it was clear from several intercepted dispatches that the Armies of Portugal and the North were about

[1] Graham's diary in his *Life*, by Delavoye, p. 577.
[2] Ibid., August 29th.
[3] Ibid., September 2nd, p. 582.
[4] Wellington to Graham, September 16, *Dispatches*, viii. 284.

to unite in full force, and, as the British general remarked in a letter which lapsed into unwonted jocularity, 'The devil is in the French for numbers[1]'. He had got to know that Souham's strong division had come to the front to join Dorsenne[2], and that the guard-divisions, of Roguet and Dumoustier, with their attendant cavalry and artillery made up 15,000 men, and not 7,000 as he had hitherto supposed[3]. It was possible, nay probable, that the Army of the North would put at least 25,000 men into the field for the combined movement now pending[4], and Marmont, if he came in full force, might bring 35,000 more. It was impossible to stop such a mass of men in the plain east of Rodrigo, where the ground was all suited to cavalry operations, and where no good defensive positions were to be found. If the enemy were determined to relieve the place he could certainly accomplish his desire.

Wellington had a little more than 46,000 men under his hand at this moment. The total should have been higher, but all the newly arrived detachments had been in the Walcheren expedition, and the heat of the Spanish summer had brought out the fever which lurked in the bodies of the men who had served in that pestilential spot. Battalions which had landed at Lisbon in June with 700 or 800 men had gone down to 400 or 500 bayonets in September, though the marches had not been heavy[5]. Nor had the old Peninsular regiments escaped a touch of Guadiana fever during their stay near Elvas in July. Wherefore there were no less than 14,000 sick in the British army at this moment, and the force present under arms in the seven divisions on the Beira frontier was (excluding the Portuguese)

[1] To Beresford, *Dispatches*, viii. p. 97.

[2] This is mentioned in his letters to Henry Wellesley of August 22 and to Craufurd of August 28.

[3] To Henry Wellesley on August 28; cf. to Lord Liverpool of same date.

[4] To Lord Liverpool, *Dispatches*, viii. 256.

[5] Some typical regimental figures of September 15, 1811, may serve as illustrations. The 68th (only just landed) had 233 sick to 412 effective, the 51st (landed in April) 246 sick to 251 effective. The 77th landed on July 5th with 859 of all ranks, but had only 680 effective on August 5, and 560 on September 15. The 40th had, on September 15, 791 effective and 513 sick. The total sick on the last-named day were, 'present' 1,720, 'hospitals' 12,517, or 14,237 in all.

only 29,000 sabres and bayonets. Of the Portuguese the seven infantry and two cavalry brigades serving with the main army made up about 17,000 men more[1]. With 46,000 men Wellington refused to offer battle beyond the Agueda to the combined French forces, which might well amount to 60,000 men, and could not be less than 53,000 or 55,000. But he was determined not to retire an inch further from Rodrigo than was necessary, being convinced that the enemy could only remain concentrated for a few days, and could have no serious intention of invading Portugal. Though he might not be able to fight in the open plain, he was prepared to defend himself in the skirts of the mountains, if the French should push out beyond Rodrigo. Here he had two positions already selected, the first at Fuente Guinaldo, where the rugged ground begins, the second by Rendo and Alfayates, in front of Sabugal, which was far more formidable: this was the ground which Spencer had been told to take up in April, when he had been left opposite Masséna during Wellington's absence at Badajoz. The Guinaldo position, being less defensible by nature, was to be rendered strong by art. During its stay there in September the 4th Division sketched out an entrenched camp along the hills, but only two redoubts and some long lines of trench had been completed when the crisis came at the end of the month.

Meanwhile Wellington did not intend to retire on Guinaldo, much less on the Rendo-Alfayates position, unless he were forced to do so. He thought it likely that Marmont and Dorsenne would content themselves with relieving Rodrigo, and would push no further. Wherefore he directed that Picton and Craufurd, the generals in command of the two blockading divisions, should leave the Salamanca road open, when the French appeared in strength, but should not give back from the immediate neighbourhood of the fortress unless they were attacked in force. Craufurd might get behind the Vadillo, a torrent which falls into the Agueda five miles above Rodrigo. Picton was to occupy the isolated plateau on which lie the villages of El Bodon and Pastores, five or six miles south of Rodrigo. Here they

[1] Brigades of Pack and MacMahon, with the other five brigades incorporated in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th Divisions, and two weak cavalry brigades under Madden. See tables in Appendix XX.

were to stand, and to see what the enemy intended to do; probably they would have to retreat no further. This disposition, which was founded on a false psychological estimate of the character of Marmont, was to lead to trouble. The Marshal was more enterprising than Wellington had calculated, and (as affairs turned out) it would have been safer to concentrate the whole army on the Fuente Guinaldo position the moment that the Armies of Portugal and the North appeared in front of Ciudad Rodrigo.

SECTION XXIX: CHAPTER II

EL BODON AND ALDEA DA PONTE

THE long-threatened advance of the French for the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo began at last on September 22nd, when Marmont brought all the infantry of the Army of Portugal, save the single division of Foy, across the Sierra de Gata, and appeared with his vanguard at Tamames, the little town on the Leonese side of the mountains where del Parque had beaten Marchand in 1809. Foy alone had been left in New Castile, with orders to demonstrate from his base at Plasencia against Wellington's posts between Castello Branco and Sabugal, where (as it will be remembered) the 5th Division was lying, placed on this side for the express purpose of warding off any attempt to strike at the communications of the allied army.

On the day that Marmont with five divisions of infantry and Montbrun's cavalry began to debouch from Tamames, his colleague Dorsenne had brought forward the disposable portion of the Army of the North to San Muñoz, a long march in front of Salamanca, and was in easy touch with the Army of Portugal. Dorsenne had concentrated four divisions of infantry—the two of the Imperial Guard under Roguet and Dumoustier, Souham's newly arrived battalions, and the division so long commanded by Serras, but now under General Thiébault, the governor of Salamanca, which had been lying about the Esla and the Orbigo ever since 1809. He had also with him two brigades of cavalry, Lepic's 800 sabres of the Imperial Guard, and Wathier's *chasseurs*. The two armies joined on the 23rd, and showed a formidable total, larger than that which Masséna had collected for the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro. For Marmont had brought 25,000 foot and over 2,500 horse, and Dorsenne a slightly larger contingent, about 27,000 infantry and 2,000 sabres [1]. This

[1] Thiébault (*Mémoires*, iv. p. 510) gives the total at 48,000 infantry and nearly 4,000 cavalry. I imagine the real total to have been a little larger,

heavy force of 58,000 men, if artillery be reckoned in, was, as Wellington had always foreseen, more than the Anglo-Portuguese army could face. For including the division south of the Sierra de Gata, which was protecting the southern communications of the army, Wellington had with him as we have seen no more than 2,200 British and 900 Portuguese cavalry, about 25,000 British and 16,000 Portuguese infantry, or a total strength (including artillery, &c.) of about 46,000 officers and men of all arms. The risk of fighting in the open plain in front of Ciudad Rodrigo would clearly be too great, though by a retreat into the Portuguese mountains it would be possible to find a position which should compensate for the numerical deficiency of the allied army. If the French should press forward, it would clearly be necessary to retire on to better battle-ground, and Wellington's ready eye had found two successive positions, as we have already stated, the one at Fuente Guinaldo on the foot-hills, the other between Rendo and Aldea Velha, in front of Sabugal, well within the mountains.

Meanwhile it remained to be seen whether the French, with the large force that they had collected, would content themselves with throwing a new convoy into Ciudad Rodrigo, a thing that could not be prevented, or whether they intended to press the allied army hard, and to endeavour to bring it to action—in which case the retreat into the hills would become necessary. On the morning of the 23rd Wellington, perfectly informed as to the position of the enemy, and fairly well able to estimate their numbers, wrote to Charles Stuart, 'the French have not yet appeared, but I think they will before evening. I shall have my hands very full of business for the next three or four days[1].' They were to be fuller than was convenient, and partly by his own fault.

On learning that Marmont and Dorsenne were at San Muñoz with over 50,000 men, Wellington, if he had practised his accustomed caution, would have concentrated on Fuente Gui-

about 58,000 in all. By the returns of the summer of 1811 the two guard-infantry divisions had 15,000 men, Serras's (Thiébault's) 4,000 men, Souham's nearly 8,000.

[1] Wellington to Charles Stuart, from Fuente Guinaldo, September 23rd. *Dispatches*, viii. p. 299.

naldo, withdrawing the two divisions which lay close into Ciudad Rodrigo, the Light Division at Martiago, the 3rd Division on the heights by El Bodon and Pastores. It would have been sufficient to leave a cavalry screen as close to the blockaded fortress as was practicable. But for once he showed an unwonted tendency to take dangerous risks. He did not wish to fall back unless he were pressed, and he thought it extremely probable that the enemy had no further design than to revictual Rodrigo. Refusing to give up valuable ground unless he were forced to do so, he left Craufurd and Picton in their advanced positions all through the 23rd and 24th of September. He did not call Graham and the 1st and 6th Divisions in from the left, where their present position on the Azava covered the road to Almeida and the valuable accumulation of artillery stores at Villa da Ponte. Nor did he bring up the 7th Division to his head quarters at Fuente Guinaldo, where he lay for these two days with the 4th Division alone.

The cavalry at the head of the French column appeared in the plain beyond Ciudad Rodrigo on the 23rd, as Wellington had expected, and communicated with the place. It was in no way hindered, as the British cavalry fell back beyond the Agueda by order, and left the Salamanca road open. On the 24th a very large force was up—observers on the heights of Pastores saw a great mass of cavalry in the plain below them, and four divisions of infantry, one of which was made out by telescopes to belong to the Imperial Guard, from its high plumes and bearskins[1]. It was presently discovered that an even larger mass was close behind, encamped on the Guadapero stream, beyond the low hills which lie east of Ciudad Rodrigo. But on this day the enemy, though he had some 4,000 cavalry in his front line, made no attempt to push forward either against Picton or against Craufurd. This quiescence on his adversary's part evidently made Wellington conclude that he need fear nothing, that the French had come merely to revictual their garrison, not to take the offensive against the allied army. He left his divisions in the scattered posts which they were occupying, with sixteen miles between Graham on the left and

[1] According to Marmont (*Mémoires*, iv. p. 63) only one division, Thiébault's, actually entered the town.

Craufurd on the right. And he neglected the fact that his concentration point at Fuente Guinaldo was only fifteen miles from Ciudad Rodrigo, where the leading section of the French army, over 20,000 strong as he had seen, was already encamped. If it should march suddenly forward on the 25th, the 3rd Division was only five miles from its outposts, on the heights of Pastores and El Bodon, and there was no other division save the 4th placed directly to cover Fuente Guinaldo. If the flank divisions were called in on an alarm, Graham was fifteen miles from Fuente Guinaldo, Craufurd eleven, on the other side of a river with few fords. And by the time that they could concentrate, the French van might be supported by the large reserves which were known to be lying behind Ciudad Rodrigo. It is one of the best-known axioms of war that the concentration point of a scattered army must not be within one short march of the base from which the opponent can strike.

Wellington was so far right in his judgement of the enemy's designs, that it was true that Marmont had come forward without any definite intention of forcing on a fight, or of advancing far into Portugal. His subsequent offensive move, however, was provoked by his discovery that the allied army was quite close to him, but wholly unconcentrated. On the morning of the 25th it occurred to the Marshal that it would be desirable to find out by reconnaissance whether Wellington had been making any provision for a regular siege of Ciudad Rodrigo—whether he had been collecting fascines and gabions in the neighbouring villages, or had brought up heavy artillery close to his blockading line[1]. If this should turn out to be the case, the knowledge of it would have a serious effect on all the future movements of the Army of Portugal. For a siege is a different thing from a blockade, and, if Rodrigo were in danger of actual leaguer, his own army would have to canton itself in regions less remote from the Portuguese frontier than those which it had hitherto occupied.

Dorsenne was persuaded to assist the Army of Portugal in a great reconnaissance, which was to push back Wellington's

[1] This reason for his great reconnaissances of September 25th is the only one given by Marmont (*Mémoires*, iv. p. 63).

cavalry screen and see what lay behind it. In the morning of September 25th the two cavalry brigades of the Army of the North went out on the Carpio–Espeja roads to sweep the line of the Azava, with Wathier in command. At the same time Montbrun took the bulk of the cavalry of Marmont, two brigades of dragoons and two of light horse, and advanced along the southern road, that which runs from Ciudad Rodrigo past El Bodon towards Fuente Guinaldo. Only one infantry division, that of Thiébault, the weakest in the two armies, was put under arms to support the cavalry, and even these 4,000 men did not leave the immediate vicinity of Ciudad Rodrigo—they merely crossed the Agueda and halted. The two reconnaissances brought on two separate engagements, at a distance of ten miles from each other, of which one had no importance, immediate or ulterior, while the other led to sharp fighting and revealed to the French the weakness of Wellington's position. The cavalry screen of the allied army was formed as follows: Madden's Portuguese division lay along the line of the lower Agueda, which was not threatened this day. Anson's brigade held the line of the Azava, and lay across the Carpio road. Alten's brigade was strung out along the low hills from south of Carpio to the upper Agueda near Pastores, and had one of its squadrons detached with the Light Division beyond that river, in front of Martiago. Slade's and De Grey's brigades were far to the rear, behind Fuente Guinaldo, in Villar de Toro and other villages along the Coa river, and only came up to the front after midday on the 25th.

Wathier's insignificant engagement on the lower Azava may be dealt with first. About eight in the morning the pickets of the 14th Light Dragoons detected a strong column of cavalry coming out of Rodrigo, and were forced to retire from Carpio and other posts beyond the stream. The enemy could be counted from the hills above, and it was noted that they left six squadrons beside Carpio in reserve, and were advancing with eight more. These crossed the river and felt their way cautiously towards the heights. They were coming straight against the front of the 6th Division, and Graham sent out the light companies of Hulse's brigade to line the wood which covered the position which he was holding. The two British

cavalry regiments (14th and 16th Light Dragoons) gave back to the edge of the wood also, and formed up close to their infantry supports. Misliking the look of the long belt of trees which hid all from him, Wathier halted four squadrons more on the flat ground just beyond the Azava, and moved the other four towards Graham's unseen line. This advanced guard consisted of the Lancers of Berg and the 26th *Chasseurs*. When they were feeling their way up the slope their leading squadron was charged and driven back by a squadron of the 14th. The main body, however, picked up the beaten unit and advanced again: when they had got close to the wood, the light companies of the 11th, 61st, and 53rd fired a volley into them, and while they stood staggered by the unexpected salute four squadrons of the 14th and 16th charged them, broke them, and chased them for two miles down to and across the Azava[1]. The French reserve left close to that stream retired at once, covering the broken squadrons. The French lost one officer and ten men killed, and five officers and thirty-two men taken, mostly wounded. The British loss was very small—an officer and ten men wounded and one man missing.

Wathier stayed in line at Carpio, without making a further advance, till evening, and reported that the English were in position with all arms beyond the Azava, and not inclined to give way. This was important news, for, if there were infantry so far north, it was clear that Wellington had not yet concentrated his army on the Fuente Guinaldo line.

Montbrun's reconnaissance, along the Fuente Guinaldo road, turned out a much more lively and important affair. He started out with a heavy column consisting of two brigades of his own dragoons and two of light cavalry[2], which came into touch with the vedettes of Alten's brigade almost the moment that it had crossed the Agueda, for the British outposts lay within two

[1] This was the first time on which the British cavalry fought lancers (at Albuera it was only infantry which were charged by the Poles). Tomkinson of the 14th reports (*Diary*, p. 115): 'They looked well and formidable till they were broken and closed with by our men, and then their lances were an encumbrance. . . . Many caught in the appointments of other men, and pulled them to the ground.'

[2] That of Lamotte (1st and 3rd Hussars, 15th and 22nd *Chasseurs*) and that of Fournier (7th, 13th, 20th *Chasseurs*).

miles of Rodrigo. Driving straight before him, Montbrun pierced the screen, and pressing up the slope found himself in the middle of the scattered fractions of the 3rd Division, which Wellington had only just begun to draw together when he saw that the reconnaissance was being made by no less than 2,500 horse. There was not time to concentrate, because the posts of Picton's battalions were too close to the enemy, and the position was unsatisfactory. Graham, who had surveyed it a few weeks before, remarks in his diary that it was 'by no means favourable —extensive, yet very narrow, and the right thrown back across the plain towards the ford by Pastores, where there is little advantage of ground but a bank and a little water-run [1].'

At the moment when Montbrun broke through the cavalry screen, Picton's infantry was strung out on a front of six miles—the 74th and three companies of the 5/60th were at Pastores, near the Agueda, the remainder of Wallace's[2] brigade (the 1/45th and 1/88th) was three miles south-west of Pastores in the village of El Bodon. Colville's brigade and the Portuguese were equally split up—the 1/5th and 77th, with the 21st Portuguese in support, being on high ground across the road from Rodrigo to Fuente Guinaldo, in the centre, while the left section of the front of the division (94th, 2/83rd and 9th Portuguese) was on lower ground, two miles west of Colville, in the direction of Campillo. Alten's cavalry brigade, having sent a squadron of the 11th Light Dragoons to watch Craufurd's front, beyond the Agueda, and having strong pickets out to right and left, had only 500 sabres left as its main body. These five weak squadrons (three of the 1st Hussars K.G.L., two of the 11th Light Dragoons) were across the high-road, near the 5th and 77th, and with them the two Portuguese batteries under Major Arentschildt which formed the divisional artillery of Picton.

Marmont, on discovering the scattered position of the Allies, could hardly believe that they had nothing more in his front than what he saw—four groups of two or three battalions each, with huge gaps between them. He suspected that Wellington must have reserves close behind, not thinking it likely that he

[1] Graham's diary, in his *Life* by Delavoye, p. 577.

[2] Wallace of the 88th was commanding the brigade vice Mackinnon, on sick leave in England.

would have kept infantry so close to Ciudad Rodrigo unless he were in force to resist an attack. He accordingly resolved not to send for his infantry from the rear and engage in a serious action, but to direct Montbrun to drive in one section of the hostile front with his heavy column of cavalry, and so to discover the exact strength and position of the Allies[1]. It was lucky for Wellington that the Marshal limited his ambitions to this modest scheme. Montbrun resolved to break in the allied centre, across the high-road, and advanced up it, leaving on his left the two fractions of Wallace's brigade in Pastores and El Bodon. If he could pierce the centre, this wing would be in a disastrous plight, being cut off from its line of retreat and its power of rejoining Wellington at Fuente Guinaldo. Accordingly the whole of the French horse came up against the position across the road, where Colville's two battalions and Arentschildt's batteries blocked the way, while Alten's five squadrons were covering their flank. The contest was of an abnormal sort, 2,500 horse with one battery attacking a smaller force of all arms—1,000 infantry, 500 sabres, and two batteries[2].

It was most important to Wellington that the detachment across the road should not be driven in, and he gave orders that it was to hold its ground to the last possible minute, in order to allow the battalions in Pastores and El Bodon time to escape from their compromised position, and to fall into the line of retreat behind the detaining force. His command was well obeyed, and a most gallant struggle was kept up for more than an hour, under the Commander-in-Chief's own eyes.

Montbrun came on with three columns abreast, each formed of a brigade, while a fourth brigade formed his reserve. His left column tried to turn the right of Alten's cavalry, his centre column attacked its front, his right column, supported by a

[1] 'Comme la position des Anglais était très dominante, je ne pouvais juger quelles forces ils avaient en arrière: il était possible que ses premières troupes fussent soutenues par d'autres. Ne voulant pas risquer un engagement sérieux, en les faisant attaquer par la seule division d'infanterie qui fût à portée [Thiébault], je pris le parti de n'employer à l'attaque que de la cavalerie et de l'artillerie. Si l'ennemi était en force, elle en serait quitte pour se retirer.' (*Mémoires*, iv. p. 64.)

[2] Not counting the 21st Portuguese, which came up later, and was not engaged in the actual combat.

horse-artillery battery, moved up against the Portuguese guns and their infantry supports. There was fierce fighting all along the line: the allied horse, aided by the steep slope in their favour, made a wonderful fight against the superior numbers of the enemy, who had to attack in each point on a narrow front, since only parts of the hillside were open ground suitable for cavalry movements. Each time that the leading French squadron neared the crest it was charged and thrown back. The 11th and one squadron of the Germans dealt with the flank attack, the rest of the legionary hussars with that in the centre. The defence was most desperate, consisting in a long series of partial charges, in which one or more of the defending squadrons beat back the head of the hostile advance, and then retired under cover of the others. Montbrun, having six or seven regiments with him, was always able to launch a new attack up the hillside the moment that the last had been foiled. The colonel of the German hussars wrote that from first to last the enemy came on nearly forty times, yet never was allowed to reach the crest: the individual squadrons of his regiment and of the 11th had charged eight or nine times each[1].

Meanwhile, to the right of the plateau which the cavalry defended so gallantly, the third French cavalry column had attacked the Portuguese batteries whose fire was sweeping down the road. A dragoon brigade, though suffering heavily from the grape poured into it as the range grew close, succeeded in making its way to the guns, and burst in among them, capturing four pieces; the artillerymen had held their ground to the last, and earned Wellington's praise for their steadiness. But the pieces were not lost; close in support of them was the first battalion of the 5th regiment under Major Ridge, who, when the hostile horsemen halted for a moment around the captured guns, attacked them without hesitation in line. The battalion advanced firing, and with three volleys broke the dragoons, who were blown with their charge and in much disorder. They recoiled down the hill in complete rout, and

[1] The best account of this fine skirmish, carefully constructed from original authorities, is in Schwertfeger's *History of the German Legion*, i. 337–9.

the Portuguese gunners were able to get their pieces in action again and resume their very effective fire[1]. This was a rare example of a successful attack on cavalry by infantry in line: it could not have been tried against intact squadrons, for there was no flank-support for the 5th, and an enemy in good order would have turned the battalion and cut it up from the side. But Ridge saw that the French were in complete disarray, and unfit for the moment to manœuvre, wherefore he was justified in trying the dangerous-looking movement which had such complete success.

The French at last gave up their frontal attacks; it is said that when the trumpets blew for one more advance, the Allies saw the regiment at the head of the column refuse to move forward. Montbrun thereupon tried a move which he might well have made half an hour earlier; he began to extend his hitherto concentrated brigades, and thrust one of them into the gap between the hill that he could not force and the village of El Bodon.

Wellington then gave back; Picton and the two battalions in El Bodon had by this time evacuated it, and were, as ordered, on their way to the rear. The still more compromised detachment in Pastores had also got away, and was making for Fuente Guinaldo by a very circuitous road: it forded the Agueda, went ten miles on its further side, where no French were as yet visible, and then recrossed again near Robleda, joining the 4th Division at dusk.

The second period of the combat of El Bodon—to give its usual name to the engagement—was less bloody than the first, but quite as exciting. Wellington's order of retreat was that the two batteries of Arentschildt with a cavalry escort went first, then the 21st Portuguese, which had remained in reserve all through the earlier fighting, then the 5th and 77th in a single square[2], and lastly two squadrons of the German hussars,

[1] Arentschildt's gunners did not suffer so much as might have been expected, and Wellington was inaccurate when, in his dispatch, he says that they were cut down at their guns. The Portuguese returns show that they lost only one man killed and four wounded.

[2] They only made up 1,000 bayonets between them, and the 77th, only 450 strong, would have made a very small square by itself.

which remained on the position till the last moment. This column, retreating along the high-road, had in front of it, and ultimately caught up, the other fractions of the 3rd Division, Picton's two battalions which had come in from the right, and the 94th, 2/83rd, and 9th Portuguese, which had fallen into the road from the left. But in the first hour of the retreat these detachments had not yet been overtaken.

Montbrun pressed on fiercely, the moment that he saw that the hill so long held against him had been abandoned, and beset the retreating column on all sides as it marched along the flat. The hussars in the rear were driven in by overwhelming numbers, and had to retire to the neighbourhood of the 21st Portuguese. This left the square composed of the 5th and 77th exposed to the full force of the enemy. Montbrun caused it to be charged on three sides at once; but the British infantry showed no disorder, reserved their fire till the enemy was within thirty paces, and then executed such a regular and effective series of volleys that the dragoons were beaten off with loss, and could not close at any point. The German squadrons then turned back and charged them as they retired in disorder.

This repulse checked the French for half an hour, but presently they were up again, not only hovering round the two squares, that of the 5th and 77th and that of the 21st Portuguese, which brought up the rear, but riding all down the side of the division, which now formed one long column of march. But they dared not charge again: Montbrun merely brought up his horse-artillery battery, and plied the enemy with fire from several successive positions. It was not ineffective, but the allied infantry refused to be troubled with it, and continued to march as hard as they could along the high-road. 'For six miles across a perfect flat,' writes an eye-witness, 'without the slightest protection from any incident of ground, without their artillery, and almost without cavalry (for what were five squadrons against twenty or thirty?) did the 3rd Division continue its march. During the whole time the French cavalry never quitted them: six guns were taking the division in flank and rear, pouring in a shower of round shot, grape, and canister. This was a trying and pitiable situation for troops to be placed in, but it in no way shook their courage or confidence: so far

from being dispirited or cast down the men were cheerful and gay. The soldiers of my own corps, the 88th, told their officers that if the French would only charge, every officer should have a *nate* horse to ride upon. General Picton conducted himself with his usual coolness. He rode on the left flank of the column, and repeatedly cautioned the different battalions to mind their quarter-distance and the "tellings off." We had at last got close to the entrenched camp at Fuente Guinaldo when Montbrun, impatient that we should escape from his grasp, ordered his troopers to bring up their right shoulders and incline towards our marching column. The movement was not exactly bringing his squadrons into line, but the next thing to it, and they were within half pistol-shot of us. Picton took off his hat, and holding it over his eyes as a shade from the sun, looked sternly but anxiously at the French. The clatter of the horses and the clanking of the sabres was so great, when the right squadrons moved up, that many thought it the preliminary to a general charge. Some mounted officer called out, "Had we not better form square?" "No," replied Picton, "it is only a ruse to frighten us, and it *won't do*."[1]

Montbrun's bolt, indeed, was shot. For by this time troops were coming out from Fuente Guinaldo to cover the retreating division, De Grey's heavy dragoons, who had just come up from the Coa, at the head of them. The French horse slackened their pace, and finally drew off. Half an hour later the retreating column had taken up its destined position in the half-completed entrenched camp where the 4th Division was awaiting it.

This long straggling fight cost the Allies only 149 casualties. The cavalry had lost 70 men[2] in their long fight to hold the hill, which they so long guarded, on the flank. Of the infantry the 1/5th and 77th had lost 42 men, not by the sabres of the cavalry whom they had driven off so serenely, but by the artillery fire which followed. The other eight infantry battalions of the 3rd Division, British and Portuguese, had lost only 34 men in all, mostly, it is to be presumed, by the cannonade during the

[1] Memoirs of Grattan of the 88th, pp. 116–17.

[2] 1st Hussars K.G.L. 5 killed, 2 officers and 32 men wounded, 5 men missing; 11th Light Dragoons 8 killed, 2 officers and 14 men wounded.

retreat. The Portuguese gunners had only 5 men hurt—a light loss considering that the enemy's dragoons had been among their pieces for five minutes.

Montbrun's loss is nowhere accurately stated, but was probably about 200 at the least. Thirteen officers had been hit in the four brigades engaged, and though cavalry was more heavily officered in proportion to its numbers than infantry, we can hardly suppose that where 13 officers fell less than 190 rank and file were killed or wounded[1].

Wellington was lucky to have paid no greater price for his rash maintenance of a position so dangerously close to the walls of Ciudad Rodrigo. If Marmont had brought up infantry close behind his great cavalry force, the 3rd Division would have suffered far more; it might even have been destroyed. But there was, as we have seen, only one French infantry division under arms on the morning of the 25th, that of Thiébault. Three more were encamped beyond Rodrigo, the rest were still some miles to the rear, halting by the Guadapero river. Marmont sent for Thiébault, when he had discovered the position and the weakness of Picton's scattered brigades. But, luckily for the British, Dorsenne had also dispatched orders to this division, which formed part of his own Army of the North. He had been alarmed at the strength of the Allies on the Azava, which Wathier had discovered, and had told Thiébault to march to his right and support the cavalry on the Carpio road. When Masséna's aide-de-camp arrived, to hurry up this infantry, it was found to have gone off some miles to the north-west; and though promptly recalled it did not reach the ground in front of Fuente Guinaldo till late in the evening. Deprived of Thiébault's battalions by this chance—one of the many results of a divided command—Marmont summoned up the three divisions which lay on the other side of Rodrigo. Not having been warned for service on this day, they took some time to get under arms, and more to file over the narrow bridge over the Agueda. They only reached and joined the Marshal and Montbrun a short time before Thiébault arrived. Thus all day

[1] According to Martinien's invaluable lists, the 25th Dragoons lost 3 officers, the 22nd *Chasseurs* 4, the 6th and 15th Dragoons 2 each, the 8th and 10th Dragoons 1 each.

Marmont had no infantry in hand, with which to support his cavalry[1]. But at nightfall he had 20,000 bayonets at the front, and the five rear divisions, left hitherto on the Guadapero, were also coming up, and had reached and passed the Agueda. There would be nearly 60,000 men at the front by noon on the 26th.

Wellington's position at Fuente Guinaldo was therefore very hazardous. When night fell on the 25th he had only assembled in the half-finished entrenchments the 3rd and 4th Divisions, Pack's independent Portuguese brigade, and the cavalry of Alten, De Grey, and Slade, or about 15,000 men. He had sent orders to the other fractions of his army to concentrate there, but it was certain that some, and possible that others, of them would not get up on the morning of the 26th. The concentration orders had gone out too late. Graham was directed to unite the 1st and 6th Divisions and McMahon's Portuguese at Nava de Aver, abandoning the lower Azava to a rearguard composed of Anson's cavalry. He was, as he wrote to his brother-in-law Cathcart, 'amazingly relieved' to have permission to draw in towards the centre[2]; but the orders came late and did not go far enough—at Nava de Aver, which he reached at noon on the 26th, he had 13,000 men collected, but he was still twelve miles from Fuente Guinaldo, and the road to that point by Puebla de Azava was not out of reach of molestation by the French. It was only in the afternoon that he received a second dispatch, telling him not to move on Fuente Guinaldo, but to get behind the Villar Mayor stream, and march by a circuitous route, through Villar Mayor and Bismula, to join the main army at a point more to the rear[3]. The Commander-in-Chief had resolved to evacuate Fuente Guinaldo.

Thus, by his own fault, Wellington was short of two divisions and a brigade from his left, in the perilous afternoon hours of

[1] Marmont, in his *Mémoires*, iv. p. 65, says that he sent for Thiébault's division when Montbrun was checked, but 'l'ordre, envoyé lentement, fut exécuté plus lentement encore,' and Thiébault only appeared at nightfall. The general himself gives the explanation (*Mémoires*, iv) : the French right (i. e. the wing towards Carpio) seeming to be menaced, 'they sent me off to a point where no enemy was to be found.'

[2] Graham to Cathcart, in his *Life* by Delavoye, p. 598.

[3] Graham's diary, ibid., August 26.

the 26th. And on his right also he was weak, owing to the fact that he had deliberately left Craufurd upon the Vadillo, beyond the Azava, till the 25th. - At the moment when the combat of El Bodon began, tardy directions were sent to Craufurd to move the Light Division to join the army, by the ford of Carros, near Robleda, high up the Azava. For it was no longer possible for him to use the easy passage by the ford of Zamorra, close under Pastores, since the French had gained possession of it when they thrust the 3rd Division southward. Craufurd, leaving only cavalry pickets along the Vadillo river, retreated that night to Cespedosa, a few miles south of his former post at Martiago. But he refused to make a night march to the ford of Carros, because the road was rough and difficult, and he thought it likely that his column might get astray and that some or all of his baggage might be lost[1]. Very possibly he was right, but the result of his not starting from Cespedosa till the dawn of the 26th was that, all through the long morning hours and early afternoon of that day, he was not in line at Fuente Guinaldo, where his chief wished to have him. He only got there, after a fatiguing march of 16 miles along the upper Agueda and over the ford of Carros, at four o'clock, when dusk was drawing near[2]. Meanwhile Marmont had been, for all the day, in a position to attack Wellington with very superior numbers.

It has often been remarked, especially by French critics, that Craufurd and his men were in grave danger on the afternoon of the 25th and the morning of the 26th, since if Marmont had sent out a heavy column on the right bank of the Agueda, to push the Light Division, it would not have been able to use the ford

[1] For notes on this point see the life of Craufurd by his grandson, Rev. Alex. Craufurd, pp. 184-5. Wellington was vexed that the Light Division had not done the night march, and, according to Larpent's *Journal* (p. 85) observed to Craufurd, with some asperity, 'I am glad to see you safe.' The answer was, 'Oh! I was in no danger, I assure you.' 'But I was, from your conduct,' answered Wellington. Upon which Craufurd observed, 'He's d——d crusty to-day.'

[2] The account of the march of the Light Division on this day is quite satisfactory. I have Sir John Bell's note that the idea that Craufurd thought for a moment of retreating by the Pass of Perales, because he feared being intercepted at Robleda, is 'nonsense.'

near Robleda, and must have fallen back into the rough country at the sources of the Agueda, where it might have been overtaken, and have suffered heavily for want of a road that would have served for its baggage. The danger has been exaggerated: though the baggage might very probably have been lost, there was nothing to prevent the troops from taking to the hill-paths, and getting to Payo or the passes of Gata by some circuitous route. All that a hot pursuit could have done would have been to make Craufurd unable to reach Fuente Guinaldo, as he actually did, upon the 26th. This would, no doubt, have been something of an advantage to the French. But Marmont would have lost the services of the force sent in pursuit, which would have had to be very strong, since no mere detachment would have been able to venture near the Light Division, on pain of being brought to action and defeated [1].

It seems that Marmont's quiescence in front of the half-occupied camp of Fuente Guinaldo, during the perilous hours of the morning and noon of September 26th, was caused by a reluctance to tackle Wellington when he had taken up a position and was offering battle. He writes in his *Mémoires* that, 'as the day wore on, I had 40,000 men assembled, within cannon-shot of the English front. But the enemy was known to have collected if not all, at any rate a very great part of his force, and was in an entrenched position. Much tempted to take advantage of the union of the Armies of Portugal and the North, and to make a stroke for victory, I passed the day in studying the English position. Attacks made without careful preparation during the recent campaigns [i. e. Bussaco and Fuentes de Oñoro] had succeeded so badly that I was deterred from inconsiderate action. Moreover General Dorsenne, who was only under my command accidentally and by his own consent, had no wish for a battle, and this rendered the enterprise more delicate. Then, too, if we tried our luck and were successful, we were not in a condition to make profit of a successful engage-

[1] Marmont (*Mémoires*, iv. p. 65) is very sure that he could have 'isolated, turned, and enveloped' Craufurd, and have destroyed him. But it is hard to see that he could really have done more than drive him on to an eccentric line of retreat.

ment, by pursuing the English into Portugal if they were beaten. So finally I gave up the idea of forcing on a fight[1].'

There is an amusing picture of Marmont's hesitation drawn by General Thiébault in his clever but malicious autobiography. In this a very different rôle is attributed to the commander of the Army of the North: 'At nine o'clock the Marshal and General Dorsenne rode to the front with their glittering staffs. The troops were put under arms at once. But the great men descended from their horses and got out telescopes, with which they began to study the English position. "Yes," began the Marshal, determined to see that which was not visible, as he peered through the large glass balanced on the shoulder of one of his aides-de-camp, "Yes, my information was correct. The right of the English line is flanked by an inaccessible declivity." General Dorsenne and I had excellent telescopes, but we could not see any such precipice. Dorsenne told the Marshal as much. Taking no notice of his remark, Marmont continued, "The whole camp is protected by closed redoubts." Dorsenne, after exchanging some words with me, replied that he could only make out a few points at which earthworks had been thrown up. The Marshal, ignoring the observations of his interlocutor, went on, "And, just as I have been told, these closed redoubts are armed with heavy guns of position forwarded from Almeida. Nothing can be done[2]." He forthwith adjourned his reconnoitring, and invited the generals to a heavy and sumptuous meal, served on silver plate in front of the line. After the feast Montbrun remarked, "The English position is impregnable—the thing that proves it so is that Wellington is offering us battle upon it. We shall never make an end of him by running at him head down; that would have no good result." Marmont soon after delivered his decision that Rodrigo, having been relieved, and the position of the English being too strong, he intended to advance no further, and should retire next day.'

If Thiébault's report of Montbrun's words and Marmont's attitude be correct, it is clear that Wellington had by mere 'bluffing' brought the enemy to a standstill. He was using

[1] Thiébault, *Mémoires*, iv. p. 66.

[2] Marmont, *Mémoires*, iv. pp. 513–14.

the reputation for caution which he had gained in his former campaigns as a moral weapon. The syllogism, 'Wellington never fights save when he has his army in hand, and has found a good position; he offers to fight now; therefore he feels himself safe against any attack,' seemed a legitimate logical process to Marmont and Montbrun. So the English general had hoped; but he did not know how entirely successful his demonstration had been; and thought that the reconnaissance followed by a halt, which he had observed in the morning, meant that the enemy was going to bring up his last reserves before attacking. The rear divisions of the Army of Portugal were seen to arrive in the French lines when the day was far spent. Wellington supposed that Marmont had been waiting for them, and would use them for a great combined attack on the 27th. He had no intention of awaiting it, even though the Light Division had reached him, and instead of ordering the other absent units of his army to close in upon Fuente Guinaldo, sent orders to them all to place themselves in the second position, nine miles to the rear, which he had chosen as his real battle-ground.

The force at Fuente Guinaldo decamped after dusk, leaving the Light Division and the 1st Hussars K.G.L. to keep up the bivouac fires along the whole line till midnight. Marching in two columns, one by the direct road by Casillas de Flores and Furcalhos, the other by a secondary path through Aldea da Ponte, the whole reached the positions in front of Alfayates where Wellington was ready to make his real stand. On the morning of the 27th the main body was joined by the 5th Division, which came down from Payo in the Sierra de Gata, having found no enemy threatening the passes in that direction. The 7th Division also arrived from Albergaria. Meanwhile Graham, with the 1st and 6th Divisions and McMahon's Portuguese, had arrived at Bismula and Rendo, and so was at last in close touch with the main body. The whole of Wellington's 45,000 men were concentrated, and, well knowing the strength of the position which he had now reached, his mind was tranquil. The front was hidden by a strong cavalry screen, Alten's brigade covering the right, De Grey's and Slade's the centre, and Anson's the left, where Graham's divisions lay.

Marmont was so far from guessing that his adversary would abandon the position of Fuente Guinaldo, that he had ordered his own army to retreat towards Rodrigo, at the very moment that the Allies were absconding from his front. During the early hours of the night of the 26th–27th, the two adversaries were marching away from each other! But at midnight Thiébault, who was in charge of the rearguard, noted that the fires in Wellington's lines seemed few and flickering, and that his sentries had got out of touch with those of the British. A reconnaissance soon showed him that there was nothing left in his front. Prompt information was sent to Marmont, and the Marshal had to reconsider his position. He determined to follow up the retreating enemy, not with the fixed intention of bringing him to action, but rather that he might be ready to take advantage of any unforeseen chance that might occur. But the pursuit could not be rapid or effective, for during the night the bulk of the Army of Portugal had been marching back towards Ciudad Rodrigo. Montbrun's and Wathier's cavalry were still at the front, but only two infantry divisions, those of Souham and Thiébault, both belonging to the Army of the North. The Marshal dared not press his enemy too hard, lest Wellington should turn upon him, and find that only 11,000 infantry were up on the French side. While the countermarch of the other seven divisions was in progress, the vanguard must not commit itself unsupported to a general action.

Accordingly Wellington's retreat was not seriously incommoded. Montbrun, followed by Souham's division, took the road by Casillas de Flores and Furcalhos: Wathier, with Thiébault's infantry in support, that by Aldea da Ponte. Montbrun ran about noon, against the Light and 5th Divisions and Alten's horse, drawn up in position in front of Alfayates, and considered them too strongly placed to be meddled with. Wathier, on the western road, was stopped in front of Aldea da Ponte by the pickets of the 4th Division and of Slade's dragoons. This village lay outside the intended line of battle of the allied army, but so close in front of it that Wellington had resolved not to let it go till he was pushed by a strong force, since it was the meeting-place of several roads and well placed for observation.

Wathier halted facing Aldea da Ponte, till Thiébault came

up and assumed the command, being senior to the cavalry general. Seeing that the village was worth having, Thiébault resolved to attack it, and drove out the light companies of the Fusilier brigade by an advance of the three battalions of the 34th Léger, one of which cleared the village while the other two turned it on each flank. Wellington, observing that the enemy had only a single division on the ground, refused to allow Aldea da Ponte to be so lightly lost, and sent against the French the whole Fusilier brigade in line, flanked by a Portuguese regiment in column. This advance forced Thiébault's first brigade back from the village, and thrust it northward some way upon the road. Here the French rallied upon their second brigade, and formed up with Wathier's horse in support. Wellington would not push them further, and contented himself with having recovered Aldea da Ponte and the junction of the roads[1].

At dusk, however, Montbrun and Souham came up and joined Thiébault, with the column which had followed the Furcalhos road. Souham determined to try again the attack in which Thiébault had been checked, and assailed Aldea da Ponte just as the light was failing. The Fusiliers were driven out of the village, and Wellington refused to reinforce them, or to allow them to make a second counter-attack, because he did not wish to get entangled in heavy fighting in the dark, or to expend many lives upon keeping a place which was outside his line, and formed no essential part of it. There had been much skirmishing all through the afternoon between Slade's two cavalry regiments and Wathier's *chasseurs*, in which neither party had any appreciable losses, nor gained any marked advantage.

The Anglo-Portuguese casualties in this rearguard action were just 100, of which 71 were in the Fusilier brigade, 13 in the Portuguese battalions which had covered its flank, and 10 in Slade's cavalry. Thiébault says that he lost 150 men, a very

[1] Thiébault, in his elaborate account of the skirmish (*Mémoires*, iv. pp. 522–5), says that he did not lose Aldea da Ponte, but I prefer to take Wellington's definite statement that he did, supported by those of Vere (the Assistant-Quartermaster-General of the 4th Division) and Lord Londonderry—both eye-witnesses.

probable estimate[1]; he adds that the British lost 500, and that he was engaged against 17,000 allied troops—which, considering that he fought no one save the three battalions of the Fusilier brigade, one regiment of Portuguese, and Slade's horse—3,300 sabres and bayonets—seems sufficiently astounding. It may serve as a fair example of his method of dealing with figures.

Next morning Wellington's line was drawn back into the position in which he had determined to fight, with the French column at Aldea da Ponte lying two miles in his front, on the lower ground. This position, which was about seven miles long, was covered on either flank by the ravine of the Coa, which here makes a deep hook or curve, with the town of Sabugal at its point. The right wing was formed of the 5th Division, holding the village of Aldea Velha on a steep hill by the source of the Coa. The right-centre, which projected somewhat, was composed of the 4th and Light Divisions ranged in front of the town of Alfayates, close by the convent of Sacaparte[2]. From that point westward the line was taken up by Pack's and McMahon's Portuguese brigades on each side of the village of Nave. Finally, the left consisted of the 1st and 6th Divisions under Graham, reaching from near Rendo as far as the bridge of Rapoulla. This wing was covered in front by the ravine of a torrent flowing into the Coa. The central reserve was formed of the 3rd and 7th Divisions with De Grey's and Slade's dragoons, drawn up behind Alfayates. Alten's light cavalry brigade was with the Light Division, its pickets thrown out on the Furcalhos

[1] Thirty killed and 120 wounded. Martinien's lists show 7 casualties among officers of Thiébault's regiments (3 in the 34th Léger, 3 in the regiment of Neuchâtel, 1 in the 4th of the Vistula). This at the average rate of 20 or 22 officers per man seems just right. By a tiresome misprint Thiébault speaks of himself as commanding the 31st Léger in many places. It was really the 34th. The 31st was in the Army of Portugal, not in that of the North.

[2] Note the curious misprint in the first line of p. 307 of *Wellington Dispatches*, vol. viii, of Light *Dragoons* for Light *Division*. Unless the misprint is noticed, the reader will ask why Wellington has omitted Craufurd in describing his order of battle. Napier, I know not why, has altogether neglected to explain the distribution of the British army, in the short paragraph of vol. iii. p. 342 which describes this day's operations.

road; Anson's brigade was placed in front of Nave and Bismula, with its advanced vedettes watching the French in Aldea da Ponte. The position was well marked, high-lying, and masked by woods and ravines. Its only fault was that the Coa ran round its rear, with only two bridges, those of Sabugal and Rapoulla da Coa, though there were at least six or seven fords in addition, and the stream was low, and passable almost everywhere for infantry. A defeat, however, would probably have meant much loss of artillery and impedimenta, though Wellington had sent great part of his baggage over the Coa, and detached all his Portuguese horse and the Portuguese brigade of the 6th Division to cover its retreat. No position is perfect, but Wellington did not think he could possibly be evicted from this one, which was as strong as Bussaco and not nearly so long. 'He wished to be attacked, being confident of success,' wrote Graham three days later[1].

But his adversaries would not oblige him. After coming up to Aldea da Ponte, and rebuking Thiébault and Souham for engaging in a profitless skirmish on the preceding day[2], Marmont took a long survey of the position of the allied army, and refused to advance any further. The reasons which he had given for not attacking at Fuente Guinaldo on the 26th, when he still had a good chance of accomplishing great things, were doubly valid on the 28th. After reasserting to Dorsenne and the other generals that Wellington's army was concentrated (which was now quite true) and that his position was far too strong to be meddled with, and adding that, even if there were a successful action, he could not pursue Wellington into the mountains for want of food, he gave his final orders for retreat. The main body of the army, which had not come further forward than Fuente Guinaldo, began to retire that same night towards Ciudad Rodrigo. The two infantry divisions at Aldea da Ponte

[1] Graham to Cathcart, October 1, in Delavoye's *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, p. 598.

[2] Thiébault's feelings were much hurt at the skirmish being called a 'scuffle.' 'Il se permit de dire que mon combat de la veille était une échauffourée. Je ne rappelle le mot que pour peindre l'arrogance d'un de ces hommes à qui leur titre de Maréchal défendait d'admettre aucun mérite en dehors d'eux-mêmes' (*Mémoires*, iv. 528).

and the cavalry of Montbrun and Wathier brought up and covered the rear. By the morning of the 29th the crisis was over, and Wellington was dictating orders for the breaking up of his army and its distribution into cantonments.

After retiring to Ciudad Rodrigo Marmont and Dorsenne parted company on October 1st, and each dispersed his troops into cantonments. The Army of Portugal recrossed the Sierra de Gata, and was distributed by divisions in the same regions of New Castile that it had occupied in September. On returning to his head quarters at Talavera, Marmont received the report of Foy, commanding the only section of his army which had not taken part in the recent campaign. That general had been ordered to demonstrate from Plasencia against Wellington's rear during the revictualling of Ciudad Rodrigo. With six battalions and a regiment of light cavalry, about 2,800 men, he had taken the direction of the pass of Perales. He reached Moraleja at the foot of the mountains, near Coria, on September 27th, the day of the combat of Aldea da Ponte. Next morning he started to ascend the Sierra, and his advanced guard got to Payo on the 29th. There it was discovered that Marmont and Dorsenne had abandoned the offensive, and started on their retreat for Ciudad Rodrigo on the 28th, so that no French troops were anywhere in the neighbourhood, while Wellington's whole army was near Alfayates, only fifteen miles away. Fearing to be discovered and overwhelmed, Foy returned to Plasencia by forced marches: his demonstration had been some days too late to be of any use. If he had appeared in the Perales pass on the 25th, while the 5th Division was still holding Payo, Wellington would have had to keep that force detached to protect his flank, and could not have withdrawn it to join the rest of his army on the Alfayates–Rendo position. But Foy came up only when the campaign was over, and his movements had no effect whatever.

The best commentary on this five days of manœuvring between El Bodon and Alfayates is that of the war-tried veteran Graham. 'It was very pretty—but spun rather fine. Had the enemy behaved with common spirit on the 26th, we should not have got away so easily from Guinaldo. I should have preferred, after it was ascertained that the enemy's force (54,000 infantry and

6,000 horse) was too formidable to be attacked beyond the Agueda, drawing back our infantry to the ultimate position (Aldea Velha, Alfayates, Rendo) which could have been made infinitely stronger during the interval. There would have been no risk whatever, nor any appearance to the troops of retreat. The enemy, as you can see, might have amused us before Fuente Guinaldo, and, by a night march from Ciudad Rodrigo, have massed at San Felices, and so have crossed the river in force by the plain of Fuentes de Oñoro. Then, pushing on rapidly by Nava de Aver, he would have tumbled us back in confusion. I thought this would have been his course, from his superiority in cavalry and artillery—all that country is like Newmarket Heath for galloping across. However, all is well that ends well[1]!'

The fact is that Wellington on the 25th made one of his rare slips. He judged that Marmont would not advance beyond Ciudad Rodrigo, and so left his troops dispersed along a vast front. When, contrary to his expectation, his enemy fell upon the 3rd Division, and pushed it back to Fuente Guinaldo, the chosen concentration point of the Allied army, he was for twenty-four hours in the gravest danger. For if Marmont had struck hard again at noon on the 26th, there was no mass of troops collected to oppose him. Craufurd and Graham would have been driven off sideways on eccentric lines of retreat, and the 3rd and 4th Divisions must surely have suffered considerable loss in the hasty retreat to Alfayates which would have been forced upon them. For on the 26th Marmont would not have been handicapped, as he was on the 25th, by having no infantry at the front to assist his numerous and daring cavalry. It may be added that, if the army had failed to concentrate at Alfayates, Almeida would have been in danger, and what was still more important, Dickson's great siege-train at Villa da Ponte would have been exposed—unless indeed Graham, driven away from his proper line of movement, might have moved westward and covered it. But speculations as to the merely possible are fruitless.

[1] Graham to Cathcart, in Delavoye's *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, p. 509.

SECTION XXIX: CHAPTER III

THE END OF WELLINGTON'S CAMPAIGNS OF 1811

THE moment that he had satisfied himself that the French were all in full retreat, and were clearly about to disperse to their old garrisons and cantonments, Wellington also broke up the army which had been lying on the Alfayates–Rendo position. On the 29th September Graham received orders to retire with the 1st and 6th Divisions to regular winter quarters in the interior of Beira, about Guarda, Celorico, and Freixadas. The 7th Division was sent southward to Penamacor. But the 3rd, 4th, and Light Divisions returned to the frontier of Spain, to establish the same sort of distant blockade (or rather observation) of Ciudad Rodrigo, which they had been keeping up in August and September. The Light Division once more crossed the Agueda, and occupied its old position at Martiago and Zamorra. The 4th Division watched the Agueda from Gallegos to Barba del Puerco [1]; the 3rd Division, in reserve behind the other two, was cantoned at Aldea da Ponte and Fuente Guinaldo. The three light cavalry brigades of Anson, Alten, and Slade took in turns the charge of covering the front of the Light and 4th Divisions along the Agueda; the two brigades not on duty were kept twenty miles to the rear, about Freixadas, Goveias, and Castel Mendo. De Grey's heavy dragoons and the head quarters of the cavalry division were close behind, at Alverca. Soon after the line of observation along the Agueda had been taken up, Wellington found it possible to send cavalry pickets forward to Tenebron and Santi Espiritus, on the other side of the Agueda, so as to block the road between Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca. But these were mere posts occupied by half a troop—there was no intention of risking any serious force in such advanced positions. Meanwhile a more effective

[1] There were changes in detail in November, for which see Vere's *Marches of the 4th Division*, p. 21.

hindrance to communication between Rodrigo and Salamanca was provided. Julian Sanchez and his guerrilleros were pushed forward to their old haunts along the Yeltes, and overran the whole country-side. Carlos de España's Spanish infantry brigade also recrossed the Agueda, and took up a forward position facing Ledesma.

Thus the posture of affairs on the frontiers of Leon was restored to the same aspect that it had displayed in the early autumn. It was clear that when Ciudad Rodrigo again needed to be revictualled, it ought to be necessary for the French to make another great effort, and to concentrate once more an army of 50,000 men. Marmont had thrown a great convoy into the place, but his calculations as to the time that these stores would suffice to feed the garrison had been wrecked, by the fact that his own army and that of Dorsenne had lived on the magazines of Rodrigo for five days, and had consumed more than 200,000 rations. It had been intended that the convoy should feed Rodrigo for six months, but only two months' food remained for its garrison of 2,000 men after this enormous deduction had been made. Meanwhile Wellington thought that there was nothing to be accomplished in the north for some time. His ultimate design was to make a serious blow at Ciudad Rodrigo, when he should learn that the disposition of the armies of Dorsenne and Marmont rendered such a blow practicable. As long as they lay so close together as to make their rapid concentration possible, he did not intend to press matters. But two indispensable preliminaries for the regular leaguer of Rodrigo were being perfected. Dickson's great siege-train was being completed at Villa da Ponte, and the repairs to the walls of Almeida were at last finished. It was Wellington's intention to transfer the siege-train to Almeida when that fortress was absolutely secure against an attack. Placed there, it would be in a position to move up against Rodrigo in two days, when the time for action should come. But it was not till November was far spent that the order to move forward reached Dickson; meanwhile the roads between Villa da Ponte, Pinhel, and Almeida were put in good order, by a corvée levied on the local peasantry [1].

[1] For all this see Dickson's *Diary*, edited by Major Leslie, R.A.,

The dispositions of the enemy remained the all-important factor in the situation, and for the next two months Wellington was scrutinizing them with the greatest care. The Army of Portugal, after it had recrossed the Sierra de Gata, had been distributed by divisions in much the same cantonments that it had occupied in September, save that no force was sent to the distant southern post of Truxillo, to keep up communications with Drouet in Estremadura. Foy's division, which had held that town during the early autumn, was reduced to such a state of dilapidation, by its late march in the mountains, that Marmont sent it to rest at Toledo, in comfortable cantonments. He replaced it at Plasencia, its later base, by the troops of Brennier. The 2nd Division (Clausel) occupied Avila and its province; the remaining three divisions (Ferey, Maucune, Sarrut) settled down at Almaraz, Talavera, Bejar, Oropesa, and the intermediate places. Montbrun's heavy cavalry remained near head quarters at Talavera; the light cavalry was placed with Brennier, along the line of the Alagon, to watch the frontier of central Portugal.

Dorsenne meanwhile executed a similar dispersion of his army. He left at Salamanca only Thiébault's division, strengthened by some light cavalry, and one brigade of Souham's [1]. The other troops that he had taken to Ciudad Rodrigo in September were sent back to Valladolid, Benavente, Palencia, and other posts in the valley of the Douro. The Army of the North ceased to threaten either Portugal or Galicia: but there was one task that it had to execute in order to replace itself in the position that it had held in the summer. Napoleon had protested at the time against the evacuation of the central Asturias and Oviedo by Bonnet's division, and had ordered that this region should be reoccupied as soon as was possible. The troops told off for its invasion were the same which had held it during the last twelve months, the division of Bonnet. To support their movement through the pass of Pajares, Dorsenne took to Leon one of his two divisions of the Guard, placing the

pp. 478–501. The order to start the first section of the siege-train for Almeida was only given on November 14. (Dickson, p. 505.)

[1] Afterwards replaced by one brigade of Dumoustier's division of the Imperial Guard.

other at Valladolid. Thiébault's and Souham's divisions alone were left in front line, facing towards Portugal and Galicia. Bonnet's expedition against the Asturias was executed with complete success; indeed it met with hardly any opposition. General Losada, who had occupied Oviedo after its evacuation, with the 1st Division of the Army of Galicia, judged himself too weak to fight. He abandoned the pass of Pajares after a mere skirmish, and made hardly a greater effort to defend the passage of the Nalon, withdrawing westward towards Galicia as the French advanced. Bonnet occupied Oviedo on the 6th of November without any fighting, and its port of Gijon on the 7th. Finding that Losada had retreated behind the Narcea, he sent a brigade under Colonel Gauthier to pursue him. This column reached Tineo on November 12th, but soon had to retire, for the Spaniards had scattered themselves in small bands among the mountains, and had turned back to attack Gauthier's line of communication with Oviedo, as well as that between Oviedo and the pass of Pajares. Bonnet found that to maintain himself in the central Asturias was all that was in his power. He could not at the same time provide garrisons for Oviedo, Gijon, and the neighbouring places, and also put in the field a force strong enough to menace Galicia. In fact his fine division of 8,000 men was practically immobilized in the district that it had seized. It is more than doubtful whether the Emperor was wise to direct that the central Asturias should be once more occupied. He deprived the Army of the North of one of its five fighting divisions, and left the force holding Leon and Old Castile too weak to restrain Wellington, when it had at the same time to contain the Army of Galicia and to hunt all the Spanish irregular forces. Julian Sanchez in the plains of Leon, and Porlier and Longa in the mountains of Cantabria, were enemies whom it was impossible to neglect. If left alone they executed feats of great daring—it will be remembered that the former had surprised and captured Santander in August [1], and though his ventures in the autumn were less fortunate, they kept many hostile columns busy. Sanchez, on October 15th, executed a very ingenious *coup de main*. The garrison of Ciudad

[1] See p. 472.

Rodrigo possessed a herd of cattle, which was habitually sent under guard to graze a mile or two from the ramparts. Watching his opportunity, on a day when the governor, Renaud, was inspecting the beasts, he swooped down on him, and carried him off with his escort and his cattle, though they were barely out of cannon-shot of the fortress. Thiébault, who commanded in the province of Salamanca, had great difficulty in getting into Ciudad Rodrigo General Barrié, whom he chose as Renaud's successor (November 1st, 1811).

Between the Tagus, therefore, and the Bay of Biscay matters had come once more to a deadlock after the short campaign of September 24th–29th, 1811. For the following three months neither the Allies nor the French made any serious movement, with the exception of Bonnet's invasion of the central Asturias. The main armies on both sides were dispersed. Wellington, with his troops distributed into cantonments, was waiting his opportunity for another and more effective blow at Ciudad Rodrigo; Dorsenne was striving to put down the guerrilleros, by hunting them ineffectually with many small columns—a task which he found more difficult now that he was deprived of Bonnet's powerful division. Marmont, with his troops dispersed from Plasencia to Toledo, was practically waiting on Wellington's movements, and showed no signs of wishing to take the offensive. His quiescence was not in the least affected by an Imperial dispatch sent from Compiègne on September 18th, which reached him shortly after his return to the valley of the Tagus[1]. In this document a most ambitious plan of operations was proposed to him. Berthier explained that the Emperor took it for granted that Ciudad Rodrigo would have been revictualled for three months before October 1st, and that the Army of Portugal would have received the cavalry drafts which General Vandermaesen was bringing from the north[2]. When these had arrived Marmont would have 41,000 men present with the colours. Let him march with this force into

[1] It may be found in Belmas, Appendix to vol. i. pp. 585–8. Marmont, for reasons not hard to divine, does not print it among the many documents containing his correspondence with the Emperor which appear in the Appendix to his Book XV. (*Mémoires*, vol. iv.)

[2] See p. 546 above.

Estremadura, pick up Drouet and the 5th Corps, which should be placed under his orders, and lay siege to Elvas. Soult should be asked to find him 3,000 cavalry, and he would have a force of 57,000 men, which would be more than Wellington would be able to face. For if the English general hurried to save Elvas, a course which he was almost bound to take, he would probably leave two divisions in front of Almeida to 'contain' Dorsenne and the Army of the North. Though he would pick up instead the corps of Hill, which had so long been lying in the Alemtejo, yet he would still have no more than 45,000 men of all nations, even including Castaños's Spanish levies. This would not be enough to cope with 57,000 French: if Wellington fought he would be beaten; if he did not, he would lose Elvas, the most important fortress of Portugal. 'This is the only movement, M. le Maréchal, which can bring back honour to our arms, free us from the defensive attitude in which we lie, strike terror into the English, and take us a step forward to the end of the war. . . . The prospect of capturing a great fortress under the eyes of the English army, of conquering a province of Portugal which covers our Army of the South, of uniting to your forces 25,000 men of that army [the 5th Corps and the cavalry] should serve you as incentives for glory and success.' Berthier then grants that it is just possible that Wellington may refuse to march to the relief of Elvas, and reply to the menace against that fortress by invading Leon and falling upon Dorsenne, who would be too weak to face him. If he does this, the Army of the North may retire first to Salamanca, then to Valladolid, then even to Burgos. At the latter point, having called in all its detachments, it would be 50,000 strong, and able to 'contain' the allied forces, even if Wellington had brought forward every available man. But Marmont might take it for granted that his adversary would do nothing of the kind: he would hurry south to save Elvas and cover his base at Lisbon. If he left no troops behind him on the Coa, Dorsenne should dispatch 15,000 men of the Army of the North to Estremadura, and bring up the force before Elvas to a total of 62,000 men, a number which Wellington could not possibly resist. Elvas must infallibly fall. Only one caution was added to this scheme of

campaign: Marmont must be sure that Wellington had not a siege-train at Almeida, or any other place near Ciudad Rodrigo. For if he were to answer the French movement on Elvas by laying formal siege to Rodrigo, Dorsenne would not be strong enough to prevent him from taking it, and the Army of Portugal would have to turn back to the rescue from its distant position in the Alemtejo.

This last caution was, in effect, a fatal block to the whole plan. For Marmont, during the El Bodon campaign, had heard of the existence of Wellington's siege-park at Villa da Ponte. And he had also found in the cantonments of the 3rd and 4th Divisions a stock of gabions and fascines, whose preparation could only mean that the British had been contemplating regular siege operations at some future date. The wood and wickerwork had been burned [1], but there was nothing to prevent Wellington from replacing it at short notice.

Yet even if Marmont had not been aware of the existence of Dickson's guns, the plan proposed to him was not so tempting at a second as at a first glance. He was well aware that such parts of it as depended on the loyal co-operation of his colleagues might not work out easily. Would not Soult find some excuse for refusing to send the 3,000 cavalry from Andalusia? Could Dorsenne be trusted to dispatch 15,000 men to the Alemtejo, if he discovered that Wellington had left no serious force on the Coa? And even if he did show such an unwonted self-abnegation as to detach two of his divisions to such a distant destination, would they get up in time for the crisis? For if Wellington marched promptly with his whole army, by Alfayates, Castello Branco, and the bridge of Villa Velha, he would be at Elvas many days before Dorsenne's detachment, which would have to take the circuitous route by Bejar, the bridge of Almaraz, Truxillo, Merida, and Badajoz. Supposing that the whole allied army came down from the north, and picked up Hill and Castaños, it would consist of well over 60,000 men, and the Army of Portugal when joined by Girard's corps would only make 57,000 men if Soult sent his cavalry, or 54,000 if (as was more likely) he found some excuse

[1] The destruction of these stores is mentioned in Marmont's *Mémoires*, iv. p. 68.

for refusing his co-operation. Could 54,000 men lay siege to a first-class fortress, and at the same time provide a covering force strong enough to fend off 64,000 of the Allies? If they tried to do so, would not the covering force be beaten in all probability? And it was probable that Wellington would come to save Elvas with every available man, for he knew that Dorsenne was not able to make any serious irruption into northern Portugal. The Army of the North could not collect more than 27,000 men for field operations (as the late campaign had shown) and such a force, destitute of stores and acting at short notice, would not get far into the wilderness of the devastated Beira, much less threaten Lisbon.

These arguments, in all probability, must have occurred to Marmont, but we have no proof that he used them. In his reply to Berthier, written at Talavera on October 21st[1], he takes another line—he reports that the difficulties of supply are so great that he has, after returning from the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo, dispersed his army from Plasencia to Toledo. He is beginning to collect great central magazines at Naval Moral, near Almaraz, which will serve for his army when next it is massed either for offensive or defensive purposes. Meanwhile, till the magazines are formed, he asks for the Emperor's leave to wait with his troops in their present positions. Wellington, he thinks, can do nothing serious for want of numbers, and the dispersion of his army into cantonments has been caused by the difficulty of feeding his men in the highlands, from which he has just retired. If, nevertheless, he tries some forward movement into Estremadura, the Army of Portugal is well placed for falling on him in the valley of the Guadiana. As for offensive plans, nothing can be done till magazines are formed, but he hopes to submit a scheme of his own to the Emperor when leave has been granted.

But meanwhile Napoleon's mind had swerved away from the scheme for an attack on Elvas and the Alemtejo, which had been formulated in the Compiègne dispatch of September 18th. Just a month later Berthier writes, by his orders, from Amsterdam, to lay down a wholly new plan. This dispatch of October

[1] This may be found printed in Belmas, vol. i. Appendix, pp. 588-90.

18th contains the germ of the great central error which was to make possible Wellington's sudden offensive move of the following midwinter, and the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo—the exploit which was to be the turning-point of the whole Peninsular War. Suchet had now started upon his long-projected march on Valencia, with which we shall deal in its proper place. He had made a good commencement, but had been brought to a stand before the walls of Saguntum. The Spaniards had begun to reinforce their eastern armies, and the Emperor realized that Suchet needed support. Therefore the army of Wellington ceased for a moment to be the central point on which his attention was fixed. 'Le principal objet aujourd'hui est Valence,' writes Berthier in obedience to his master's changed opinion. And he thereupon instructs Marmont that the Army of the Centre will have to stretch itself eastward to Cuenca, to support Suchet, and that in consequence the Army of Portugal will have to 'facilitate the task of the King of Spain,' i. e. spare troops to occupy those parts of New Castile from which Joseph must withdraw men for the expedition to the Valencian border. This was but the beginning of the scheme, which was to end by distracting a great body of Marmont's host to the shore of the Mediterranean, out of call of their commander. As we shall see, the Duke of Ragusa was finally ordered to make such a huge detachment to aid Suchet, that Wellington at last got his opportunity to strike, when the Army of Portugal was so lowered in numbers that it could not hope to restrain him. The first hint came in the above-cited orders of October 18th; in the second crucial dispatch, that of November 21st[1], Marmont is told not only that he will have to 'facilitate the task' of King Joseph, but that he must select a body of 12,000 men to march at once on Valencia, and set aside 3,000 more to keep up the line of communication with the expeditionary force. 'We are informed,' continues Berthier, 'that the English army has 20,000 sick[2],

[1] Printed in Appendix to Marmont's *Mémoires*, vol. iv. pp. 257–8.

[2] The sick have grown from 18,000 to 20,000 since the day before, which is the date of a less important dispatch, in which Marmont had been warned to set aside 6,000 men only for the Valencian expedition, because Wellington is absolutely unable to strike a blow.

and barely 20,000 able-bodied men with the colours, so that they cannot possibly try any offensive enterprise.'

This is a typical result of the endeavour to conduct the Peninsular War from Paris as head quarters. On the wholly false hypothesis that Wellington's army is reduced to a skeleton, and can do nothing, the Emperor orders his lieutenant to detach a third of the Army of Portugal beyond the reach of recall. But the English, though indeed there were many sick, had not 20,000 but exactly 38,311 men with the colours at that moment, not to speak of 24,391 Portuguese, of whom the Emperor (as usual) took no account in his calculations[1]. Wellington had been patiently waiting for months for the moment when the Army of Portugal should no longer be able to 'contain' him. The Emperor was obliging enough to provide the opportunity in December 1811, and when Montbrun had marched with two divisions of foot and one of horse to the other side of the Peninsula, Wellington struck, suddenly and successfully. 'The movements of Marmont's army towards Toledo, to aid Suchet as is supposed, have induced us to make preparations for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo,' wrote Wellington on the 28th of that month[2]. On the 9th of January, 1812, the place was invested; on the 19th it fell; and then followed in rapid succession all the triumphs of 1812. There were other circumstances, to be mentioned in their due place, which facilitated Wellington's advance: but the departure of Montbrun's 15,000 men for Valencia, by the Emperor's direct command, was the main governing fact. It is impossible to deny assent to Marmont's bitter criticism on the orders that kept coming to him during the autumn and early winter of 1811. 'Napoleon was at this period living in a non-existent world, created by his own imagination. He built structures in the air, he took his

[1] To be exact, Wellington's Return of November 22, the day after Napoleon dictated this dispatch, was:—

British. Present, 38,311; Detached, 3,917; sick (present and absent), 16,000.

Portuguese. Present, 24,391; Detached, 2,087; sick (present and absent), 6,000.

[2] Memorandum, dated 28th December, 1811, at Freneda. (*Dispatches*, viii. pp. 518–19.)

desires for realities, and gave orders as if ignorant of the true state of affairs, as if the actual facts had been purposely hidden from him[1].' It was no use to tell him that magazines were non-existent, that numbers were low, that roads were impracticable, that communications were intercepted, that he had undervalued the enemy's forces; he continued, with all serenity, to ignore tiresome hindrances, and to issue orders grounded on data many weeks old, often on data which had never been true at any moment, but which it suited him to believe. And so the catastrophe of 1812 came nearer.

We have now taken the operations of Wellington and his chief adversaries, Marmont and Dorsenne, down to the winter of 1811. But there still remains to be told the story of the autumn months in the secondary fields of operations in southern Spain. The doings of Soult in Andalusia have been followed no further than July and August, when, returning from the relief of Badajoz, he freed Seville from the menaces of Blake, and forced the Murcian army to take refuge with undignified haste within the boundaries of its own province[2]. Nor has anything been said about the operations of Hill in Estremadura, where he lay opposite Drouet and the French 5th Corps from August to December. With these subsidiary affairs we now have to deal.

Soult's victorious campaign on the border of Murcia, and the flight of Freire's army homewards, had reaffirmed the French domination in eastern Andalusia, to the extent that the large towns and the main lines of communication were again safe. But the Alpujarras were still in arms, and Ballasteros was giving much trouble from his new base in the extreme south. Excited by his presence, the Serranos of the Sierra de Ronda spread their incursions on every side, as far as Osuna and Marbella, in spite of all the efforts of Godinot, who had been told off to crush them. The strength of Ballasteros's position was that he had behind him two secure places of refuge—the old Spanish lines in front of Gibraltar, with the great fortress behind them, and, thirty miles away, the newly-repaired stronghold of Tarifa, which had been held since the late winter by a detachment of

[1] Note in Correspondence, Appendix of vol. iv of *Mémoires*, p. 259.

[2] See pp. 474–82 above.

the British garrison of Gibraltar. Avoiding serious combats, and confining his ambition to the surprise of small posts and the cutting off of detachments, Ballasteros made himself such a nuisance to the French that Soult at last prepared a great combined scheme for surrounding him. Godinot's force, operating from the north, was to work in unison with two other columns under Generals Barrois and Sémelé, sent out by Victor from the lines in front of Cadiz. The concentric advance only succeeded in driving Ballasteros southward, not in trapping him. He evacuated San Roque and Algesiras, and went under the protection of the cannon of Gibraltar, from which secure position he defied the enemy (October 14th–15th). For a moment 10,000 French lay before the English fortress, but they had not come prepared for a siege, and soon departed when their provisions failed. Godinot then made a dash at the much weaker walls of Tarifa, but was caught on the march along the seaside road—the only one that cannon could take—by a squadron of British warships, which did him so much damage that he drew off inland without even reaching his objective (October 18).

Meanwhile Ballasteros, slipping out from under the cover of Gibraltar the moment that his enemy was gone, followed Sémelé's column, which was returning to the Cadiz lines by a separate route, and surprised it at Bornos (November 5). The French (1,500 men of the 16th Léger) cut their way through the enemy with the loss of only 100 men[1]; but a *Juramentado* battalion which was accompanying them threw up the butts of its muskets and surrendered *en masse* or dispersed, and a howitzer was captured.

Soult was incensed at the failure of his great combined movement, and laid the blame on Godinot, who after a stormy interview with his chief at Seville committed suicide. The chase of Ballasteros began again, with a new set of hunters; but, as we shall see in a later chapter, was destined to prove fruitless. Nor did a serious attempt to beleaguer Tarifa with a heavy siege-train come to any good. But its siege, though commenced in the last days of the old year 1811, belongs rather to the cam-

[1] Martinien's invaluable lists show only three officers wounded in the 16th.

paign of 1812, and will be dealt with in the next volume of this work.

There remains only to be considered the state of affairs in Estremadura, where we left Hill with his two divisions, facing Drouet and the 5th Corps, in July. Their forces were not unequal [1], and each had been given by his commander a defensive rather than an offensive rôle. Soult had directed Drouet to see that Badajoz was not molested, to keep up communication, via Truxillo, with the Armies of Portugal and the Centre, and to risk nothing. If the Allies detached more troops into the Alemtejo, he was to make no attempt to face superior numbers, but to call without delay for help to his neighbours, and to retire on Merida or on Monasterio as seemed more suitable at the moment. But it was judged unlikely that Wellington would be able to make any serious detachment southward, so long as he was 'contained' by the Army of Portugal, which lay in the valley of the Tagus, ready to move towards Ciudad Rodrigo on the one hand, or Badajoz on the other, as necessity might dictate. Meanwhile here, as everywhere else in western Spain, the French had completely abandoned the offensive, and their plans contemplated the parrying of Wellington's strokes, rather than the delivery of any blows of their own. The scheme for an attack on the Alemtejo, which Napoleon had suggested to Marmont [2], was never within any measurable distance of being put into practical operation. By this time the only part of the Peninsula in which the Imperial armies retained an offensive posture was the east coast. Suchet had started on that Valencian expedition which was to have such brilliant success in itself, but was to indirectly destroy the French hold on Spain, by calling away troops from opposite Wellington at the critical moment in the midwinter of 1811–12.

[1] For Hill's force at this time see Appendix XXIII. He had 5,800 British infantry, 7,400 Portuguese infantry, 1,800 British cavalry (including Le Marchant's brigade at Castello Branco), 650 Portuguese cavalry, and about 600 artillery, &c.), about 16,000 in all. Drouet had the 9th Corps, now about 14,000 strong (it had been recruited by the return to the ranks of the convalescents of the 4,000 Albuera wounded), and six regiments of cavalry from the Army of the South, bringing up his force to much the same figure.

[2] See above, pp. 587–8.

Hill's orders from Wellington corresponded very closely to Drouet's orders from Soult. That is to say, Hill was to content himself with 'containing' the French force opposite him; to see that Elvas and Campo Mayor were covered, to make no attempt on Badajoz, and to apply for aid to his chief in the event of an increase of the hostile force on the Guadiana. The summing up of the situation, in the original dispatch which Wellington wrote to Hill when he left for the north, is simply that the force in Estremadura must pair off against Drouet. 'My wish is that you should observe the movements of the 5th Corps. If the 5th Corps should move off to cross the Tagus at Almaraz, you will then march to cross the Tagus at Villa Velha, and proceed on by Castello Branco to join this [the main] army. . . . If the 5th Corps should, instead of crossing the Tagus, manœuvre upon you in Alemtejo, I request you to move upon Portalegre, and there either stand their attack or not, as you may think proper, according to your notion of their force as compared with your own. If you cannot stand their attack, you will retire by Gavião towards Abrantes, and thence across the Zezere, taking the line of the Tagus, with Santarem on your right[1].' It being possible, though not likely, that Marmont might make an advance against the central Portuguese frontier north of the Tagus, from the Zarza la Mayor and Coria district, Hill was directed to keep one British and one Portuguese brigade in the direction of Castello Branco, as a nucleus on which troops coming from north and south might concentrate, for serious opposition to an invasion. This precautionary move was made in August, and the detachment remained north of the Tagus till September, when Foy's removal from Truxillo, and Marmont's march to the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo, showed that there was no longer any possible danger in this direction[2]. Meanwhile the main body of the allied force in Estremadura lay about Portalegre, Villa Viçosa, and Santa Ollaya, waiting for developments of the enemy's plans which never came about. For Drouet kept very quiet, generally with his head quarters at Zafra, and a strong detachment at Merida, as anxiously expectant of Hill's movements as Hill was of his.

[1] Wellington to Hill, August 8th. (*Dispatches*, viii. pp. 180–2.)

[2] See for the recall the dispatch of October 4. (*Dispatches*, viii. p. 321.)

All this time the space to the north of Hill's cantonments was occupied by the small remains of the Spanish Army of Estremadura, still under Castaños. Since the Captain-General had sent off Carlos de España to the borders of Leon, he remained with the rest of his troops in the hilly region between the Guadiana and the Tagus, with his head quarters at Valencia de Alcantara, and part of his infantry in Albuquerque, which fortress he was engaged in repairing. His advance lay at Caçeres, observing the French garrison in Truxillo, with which it often bickered. But Castaños occasionally sent a flying column out under Morillo or Penne Villemur to beat up the cantonments of the 5th Corps south of the Tagus. They ranged as far as La Serena and the Sierra del Pedroso, and on one occasion got even to Benalcazar on the very border of Andalusia, whose garrison Morillo surprised and captured [1]. Such raids were profitable for distracting the enemy, and gave Drouet much trouble. But as Castaños's whole force did not amount to much more than 600 horse and 3,000 foot, the menace was not a serious one. In the thinly peopled region of northern Estremadura it was impossible to get recruits to fill the old cadres, and the army did not grow as the commander had hoped. The regiments remained mere skeletons.

The removal of Foy's division from Truxillo in September, when Marmont drew him in to co-operate in the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo, had serious consequences in Estremadura. It will be remembered that, when the campaign of El Bodon was over, the Army of Portugal did not send back any detachment to reoccupy Truxillo—the connecting-point between the Armies of Portugal and of the South. The responsibility for keeping touch was thrown on to Drouet, who had already quite enough ground to cover with his 14,000 men. But he was forced to send a strong detachment northward from Merida, or his communication with Marmont would have been wholly intercepted by Morillo's habitual raids. Accordingly Girard's division of the 5th Corps was moved up to occupy the front between the Guadiana and the Tagus, leaving the whole stretch from the Guadiana south-

[1] For copious details see the *Life of Morillo*, by Don Antonio Villa, pp. 47–55 (Madrid, 1910).

ward to the Sierra Morena held by only one division, that of Claparéde [1], and two cavalry brigades.

Wellington, seeing the weakness of Drouet, and knowing that Soult had crushed the Murcian army in August, and therefore could find some reinforcements for Estremadura if he should please, was for some time under the belief that Hill would see new troops brought up against him from the south [2]. He reiterated his old orders: 'If you only had cavalry, you certainly have infantry in sufficient numbers to beat the 5th Corps out of Estremadura. But your cavalry is not sufficiently strong. I think, however, that you are able to prevent the 5th Corps from doing anything, even though Soult should add to it another division. . . . You must proceed with great caution, and endeavour to have the best intelligence of the force Soult brings with him. . . . Canton your troops (as soon as you find the enemy are serious in their advance upon Badajoz) nearly on the ground which we occupied with the army in the end of June and the beginning of July [the Caya position]. . . . If you should find Soult collects in too great force for you, retire upon Portalegre, and thence, if necessary, upon Gavião and Abrantes. It appears to me, however, scarcely possible for Soult to bring such a force as to be able to attack you at Campo Mayor, or to cut your communications at the same time both with Elvas and with Portalegre. . . . If Soult should bring a large army into Estremadura, with the view to enable the Army of Portugal to co-operate in the invasion of Valencia, I shall reinforce your corps with some infantry and nearly all my cavalry—and I think we shall soon have back again the Army of Portugal. If Soult comes only to throw provisions into Badajoz, I am afraid we cannot prevent it under existing circumstances [3].'

[1] At the breaking up of the 9th Corps in June, Claparéde took over Gazan's old division in the 5th Corps, and Conroux that of Ruffin in the 1st Corps. But the 9th Corps battalions were not all redistributed into their regiments till Conroux came back from Soult's campaign against the Murcians in August.

[2] See Wellington to Hill, October 4 and October 10. (*Dispatches*, viii. pp. 321, and 332–3.)

[3] Wellington to Hill, from Freneda, October 16. (*Dispatches*, viii. pp. 333–4.)

Soult, however, neither came in person to Estremadura with a large force, nor even drafted another division into the province to succour Drouet, who got no reinforcements during the autumn. He was at this time wrapped up in the internal affairs of Andalusia, and had no intention of sending troops away, unless there was urgent necessity for it. Hill, therefore, seeing that the 5th Corps had received no succours, and remained spread out on the long front from the Tagus to the Sierra Morena, while its two divisions were not in supporting distance of each other, asked for leave to make a blow at Girard, whose position was decidedly dangerous, because of his remoteness from Drouet's main body (October 15). Wellington saw the opportunity and gave instant consent: 'I should approve of adopting the measure, which should be effectual, and should drive Girard from Caçeres over the Guadiana, if you think you can do it without risking the safety of Campo Mayor and Ouguela. It appears to me you are too strong for Girard in every way, if the other division of the 5th Corps has not crossed the Guadiana[1].'

Circumstances were at this moment very much in Hill's favour, for Girard, seeking new regions to plunder for food, and angered by the raids of Castaños's detachments on the road from Merida to Truxillo, had just marched to drive the Spaniards back. Sweeping them before him, he had advanced as far as Caçeres, fifty miles from his base at Merida, and was raising contributions there. He had with him his own division of twelve battalions, a provisional brigade of cavalry under General Bron[2], and one battery—in all about 5,000 foot and nearly 1,000 horse. Hill could concentrate against him a much larger force, while still leaving something in front of Drouet, who (as he had taken pains to discover) was cantoned about Zafra with the rest of his corps—Claparéde's division, and the bulk of the cavalry. He was not in a position to accomplish anything against Campo Mayor or Elvas, for his troops were scattered over the country-side, and he showed no signs of any intention to move.

On October 20th Hill wrote to Castaños to say that he

[1] Same to same, October 17, acknowledging Hill's proposal made in a letter of October 15.

[2] Apparently 20th Dragoons, 27th *Chasseurs*, 10th Hussars.

relied on the help of Morillo's infantry and Villemur's cavalry for a blow at Girard. He himself would bring up Howard's and Wilson's (late Abercrombie's) brigades of the 2nd Division, nine battalions of Portuguese [1], and Long's cavalry brigade. The column would consist of 3,000 British and 4,000 Portuguese infantry, 900 horse and two batteries. To this Castaños could add about 2,000 infantry and 600 horse, so that a striking force of 10,000 men would be collected. Meanwhile there would be left in Portugal, to make a front against Drouet, if he should move, the remaining brigade (Byng's) of the 2nd Division [2], four battalions and two cavalry regiments of Portuguese [3], and a British cavalry brigade under Le Marchant recently arrived from home, which lay at Castello Branco, but could be called south if required.

The essential part of Hill's scheme was that Girard should be attacked and brought to action before he was aware that there was anything in his front save the Spaniards whom he had just hunted out of Caçeres. If he were to discover that there was a large Anglo-Portuguese force in his front, he would probably retire by forced marches upon Merida. It was therefore necessary to concentrate the striking force with suddenness, and to move it with the greatest possible speed. On October 22nd the three infantry and one cavalry brigades were collected at Portalegre. On the 23rd they made a tremendous march, thirty miles across the steep Sierra de San Mamed to the Spanish fortress of Albuquerque. Here Hill received news from Castaños that Girard was still at Caçeres, and had sent out flying parties to Aroyo del Puerco and other places, sweeping the countryside for food. The allied column at Albuquerque was as near Merida as the enemy, and had every chance of intercepting him if he continued quiescent. Morillo and Penne Villemur had moved to Aliseda, twenty miles from Albuquerque, and could join the British force next day. On the 24th Hill advanced to

[1] 4th and 10th Line (2 batts. each) from Hamilton's division, 6th and 18th Line (2 batts. each) and 6th Caçadores from Ashworth's Brigade.

[2] This was the brigade composed of the remnant of Colborne's and Hoghton's old regiments, viz. Buffs, 1/57th, 2/31st, 2/66th.

[3] The remainder of Hamilton's division, 2nd and 14th Line, and the 5th and 8th Cavalry.

Aliseda and Casa de Santillana, and picked up the Spaniards. Next morning Penne Villemur's horse drove the French outposts out of Arroyo del Puerco. When Girard's cavalry screen had been driven in, Hill's whole column made a night march to Malpartida, only eight miles from Caçeres, but learnt, after some delays, on the morning of the 26th that Girard had left Caçeres on the preceding afternoon by the Torremocha road, making a leisurely journey towards Merida. He had just received vague rumours that there was an Anglo-Portuguese force coming from Portugal, and thought it well to draw near to his base. Thus Hill's precautions had not been altogether successful. Girard's departure was tirèsome to Hill, as the night-march to Malpartida had taken the allied columns too far to the north, and the enemy was now between them and his own base. But if it was too late to intercept him, there was still time to pursue and overtake him, unless he should chance to quicken his pace. Before dawn on the morning of the 27th Hill turned his face southward, and marched on Torremocha; but when he had reached the pass of Trasquillon he was informed by the peasantry that Girard had left Torremocha, marching for Arroyo dos Molinos on the other side of the Sierra de Montanches. The General called on his troops to make a final effort—if Girard halted at Arroyo dos Molinos it was possible to cut him off by continuing the long march. The men responded well to the appeal, and by nightfall on the 27th the two British brigades were at Alcuescar, five miles south-west of the camp of the French, and the Portuguese and Spaniards close behind at Don Antonio. Girard had only gone twelve miles that day—the Allies no less than twenty-eight, in abominable weather, across two rough mountain ranges. It is astonishing that the French general had not made more haste, and still more so that, with three cavalry regiments for reconnoitring, he had not hit upon the track of the Allies. Bron was evidently a poor director of cavalry—his 1,000 men should have sufficed to sweep the whole country-side. But it is said that Girard was convinced that Hill had gone to Caçeres, and would listen to no warnings[1].

[1] Hill in his dispatch says that the peasantry gave Girard no news of his approach. But in Blakeney's interesting narrative of this campaign there is a story told that two *Afrancesados* warned the Frenchman of

At half-past two o'clock on the morning of the 28th the weather was still tempestuous, as it had been for the last twenty-four hours, and Hill, covered by the driving rain, marched in the dark on Arroyo dos Molinos, and covered the five miles which separated his comfortless bivouac from the French head quarters without meeting a single hostile vedette. He was able to arrange his force within half a mile of the little town undiscovered, and to make his provisions for blocking all the three roads by which Girard might escape. Arroyo dos Molinos lies under the shoulder of the precipitous Sierra de Montanches, with no track going directly northwards from it, but with country roads to Truxillo, Medellin, and Merida diverging north-eastward, south-eastward, and south-south-westward. Hill directed Wilson's brigade, supported by three Portuguese battalions, to march round the town on its southward side, and block the Truxillo road, while the rest of the infantry should attack the enemy in front, and the cavalry, both English and Spanish, should form a central column which should seize the Merida and Medellin roads and prevent the escape of Girard southward.

Not a Frenchman was seen till Howard's brigade, leading the advance of the main body, ran upon a picket half a mile outside Arroyo, the men huddling together under trees with their faces away from the driving rain and the approaching enemy. Most of them were captured, but some escaped to warn Girard, who till this moment had no knowledge that a British column was within striking distance of him. As it chanced, the French general had been preparing to start early, and Remond's brigades (the 64th and 88th of the line), escorted by one cavalry regiment, had marched an hour before on the Merida road, and were now three miles away. Girard had not, therefore, even his whole force assembled, but only the six battalions of Dombrouski's brigade (34th and 40th of the line[1]), two cavalry

Hill's approach, and that he refused to credit them. This was told to Blakeney by his prisoner, Colonel the Prince of Aremberg, commanding the 27th *Chasseurs*. See Blakeney, p. 236.

[1] The regiments, which were incomplete in July (see Appendix XVIII), had been joined before October by the battalion which each had contributed to the garrison of Badajoz.

regiments and half a battery with him—not more than 4,000 men—while 10,000 of the Allies were converging upon him from three separate quarters. At the moment when the first shots were heard on the Alcuescar road, his infantry was just getting ready to march, his baggage and a rearguard of one battalion were still in the street of Arroyo dos Molinos, many of his horsemen had not yet saddled up, and he himself was breakfasting in the Alcaide's house.

Within a few minutes of the first alarm the 71st and 92nd, at the head of Howard's brigade, burst into the little town, drove out the battalion that was holding it, and captured the whole of Girard's baggage and many prisoners. General Bron was taken in the doorway of the house which he had been occupying, just as he was about to mount. Hurrying out on the other side of the place, the advancing British found Dombrouski's brigade hastily forming up for the march. Girard had ordered an instant retreat along the Merida road. The formation of his troops was soon disordered by the fire of the advancing 71st, followed by that of three guns of Arriaga's battery, which galloped out to the town end and opened on the nearest regiment. The column, however, started off, and had gone a little way, when it discovered the allied cavalry advancing along the Merida road to meet it, Penne Villemur in front, Long in support. Girard, seeing this road blocked, bade his *chasseurs* and dragoons hold off the British and Spanish horse at all costs, and turned the infantry column towards the Truxillo road, which skirts the precipitous foot of the Sierra de Montanches. His cavalry became engaged in a confused fight, first with Penne Villemur's Spaniards and then with the 9th Light Dragoons and the 2nd Hussars of the King's German Legion. Being outnumbered, they were soon broken, many were taken, and the rest scattered and tried to get off in small parties.

The infantry, making the best speed that it could, but closely pursued by Howard's regiments and the Spanish brigade in their rear, finally reached the spot where the Truxillo road turns the corner of the sierra, a mile and a half outside Arroyo dos Molinos. By this time the rain had ceased, and the mists dispersing showed the Frenchmen Wilson's brigade marching hard to cut them off, and less than half a mile

away. Both parties started to run, and the three light companies of the 28th, 34th, and 39th, who were well ahead of their regiments, reached the road just as the leading French battalion was pushing across their front. Only 200 men were up, but Blakeney (commanding the 28th company) saw that if the hostile column were closely attacked in flank, even by a small body, its progress would be stopped, and a few minutes' delay would bring down both Wilson's and Howard's brigades upon it. Accordingly he led in person the charge of some scores of the men nearest him against the throat of the French column[1]; they were not exterminated (as might have been expected), for Girard, who was present at the spot, told his men not to stop to fight, but to escape by leaving the road and dashing uphill along the rocks of the sierra above. He himself with the leading companies got clear, hitting on a place where the side of the precipice was not too steep to climb, though the officers had to turn loose their horses before they could start on the scramble. The main body of the column was less lucky. An absolutely impassable line of cliffs was above them, and after reaching its foot a thousand men, in two or three disorderly masses, had to halt and lay down their arms to the eager pursuers from both the British brigades, who were converging upon them. A few got away by incredibly dangerous climbing, and joined Girard on top of the sierra. Meanwhile Morillo's Spanish infantry had taken an easier path up the heights, far to the left, and started in pursuit of the remnants of the French. They kept up the chase for eight leagues, and took or slew many stragglers. But Girard, Dombrouski, and four or five hundred men, bearing with them the eagles of the 34th and 40th, escaped eastward, and, after much wandering in the mountains, crossed the Guadiana at Orellana, beyond Medellin, and got back to join Drouet. Other small parties and many of the cavalry straggled in later, but Girard's force had practically

[1] Blakeney's account of his own exploit (pp. 228-9 of his book) is borne out by Hill's recommendation of him, though he is not mentioned in the formal dispatch of October 30.

[2] This Rheinbund prince had been in great favour with Napoleon, and married Stephanie Tascher, niece of the Empress Josephine. He had raised the 27th *Chasseurs* at his own cost.

been destroyed. Nearly 1,300 prisoners had been taken, including General Bron, commanding the cavalry, the Prince of Aremberg, colonel of the 27th *Chasseurs*, the *chef d'état major* of the 5th Corps, and more than thirty other officers. In addition the French lost their three guns and a contribution of 5,000 dollars levied on Caçeres a few days before. Hill's loss was insignificant—seven men killed and seven officers and fifty-seven men wounded. Penne Villemur's Spaniards, who had behaved with excellent spirit, had about thirty casualties.

After the fighting was over, Hill directed Long's cavalry, with the Portuguese regiments, who had not been engaged, to march on Merida, supporting them with Howard's brigade when it had rested. It was hoped that Remond's column, which had escaped the disaster of Arroyo dos Molinos by its early march, might be caught up. But the French brigadier had a long enough start to render this impossible: warned by fugitive cavalry of the fate of his chief, he marched through Merida without halting, and retired towards Drouet by way of Almendralejo.

Hill, after following his vanguard to Merida on the 29th and stopping there two days, returned by Wellington's orders to his old cantonments at Portalegre, which he reached on November 3rd. 'It would have been useless,' wrote Wellington, 'for him to push on his operations beyond the Guadiana—for Drouet would simply have retired before him,—and equally so to remain at Merida.' By this somewhat cryptic phrase the British commander-in-chief meant that if he had chosen to direct Hill, after his success at Arroyo dos Molinos, to march against Drouet's main body, there can be no doubt that he might have driven it into the Sierra Morena. This would have caused Soult to come to its aid with all the available troops that could be collected in Andalusia. The reason why no such orders were issued was that the British general did not wish to provoke Soult to concentrate. Hill could do nothing against the Army of the South if it came against him in force. But if it continued disseminated through all the four kingdoms of Andalusia, as it was at present, with one mass of troops opposite Cadiz, another at Granada, and the small available field force busily engaged in hunting Ballasteros, it was not to be feared. As to the uselessness of stopping at Merida, Wellington

meant that Hill, if posted there, would have been liable to be cut off from Elvas if Soult should come up in haste from Andalusia to reinforce Drouet—as was extremely likely. Wellington was contented with having broken up a French division, and cut the communication between the Armies of the South and of Portugal for a time. For when Girard was driven out of the space between the Tagus and the Guadiana, Soult could no longer communicate with Marmont.

Napoleon recalled Girard in disgrace, which he well deserved for his reckless want of caution: his maltreated division was given to General Barrois. But he was afterwards pardoned, and survived to die, still a general of division, doing good service at the battle of Ligny.

In the first moment of alarm, after hearing of Girard's disaster, Soult had expected to be pressed, had sent 4,000 infantry to reinforce Drouet, and had begun to collect other troops at Seville. But finding that Hill had no further intention of striking at the 5th Corps, and that Badajoz was not even threatened, he reverted to his earlier plans, left Estremadura alone, and continued to hunt Ballasteros, and to make preparation for his next important move—the siege of Tarifa. Drouet, for his part, having recovered from the dismay into which Girard's defeat had thrown him, once more began to move his troops northward with caution. On December 5th he reoccupied Almendralejo, on the 18th he pushed Dombrouski with a brigade to Merida, and once more opened up communication with the Army of Portugal by way of Truxillo. But the road was not to be long open. Just before the year 1811 was out (December 27th) Hill was sent forth a second time against the 5th Corps, with far more serious intentions than in October, for this expedition was part of Wellington's preliminary movements for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. It will be dealt with in its proper place.

For all intents and purposes the march to Arroyo dos Molinos forms the last episode of the campaign of 1811. Its main interest was that it showed Wellington in offensive mood, ready to take advantage of the scattered condition of his enemy. It also made it clear that in Hill he had an executive officer of the highest merit—but this was known before to all who had studied

the career of that much-loved and well-served general, for whom the 2nd Division would do anything. There was no more popular promotion during the whole war than that which made him a Knight of the Bath in reward for his little campaign.

December had now arrived—the fatal detachment of 15,000 of Marmont's men to Valencia had been ordered by the Emperor. Wellington was ready for his long-projected blow at Ciudad Rodrigo. How sharply it was delivered will be told in another volume.

APPENDICES

I

THE FRENCH ARMY IN PORTUGAL, JAN. 1, 1811

[FROM A RETURN IN THE *ARCHIVES NATIONALES*, PARIS]

	Present under Arms.		*Detached.*	*Sick.*	*Total.*
	Officers.	*Men.*			
2nd Corps. Reynier. At and about Santarem:					
1st Infantry Division, Merle	154	4,214	150	1,549	6,067
2nd Infantry Division, Heudelet	196	5,522	451	2,616	8,785
Cavalry Brigade, Pierre Soult	98	1,048	523	231	1,900
Artillery, Train, &c.	33	1,251	52	89	1,425
Etat-Major	65	—	—	—	65
Corps Total	546	12,035	1,176	4,485	18,242
6th Corps. Ney. Head quarters, Thomar:					
1st Infantry Division, Marchand	182	4,805	529	1,121	6,637
2nd Infantry Division, Mermet	212	6,040	743	1,077	8,072
3rd Infantry Division, Loison	174	4,415	1,037[1]	3,291	8,917
Cavalry Brigade, Lamotte	48	604	663	117	1,432
Artillery, Train, &c.	34	1,735	47	165	1,981
État-Major	77	—	—	—	77
Corps Total	727	17,599	3,019	5,771	27,116
8th Corps. Junot. Head quarters, Torres Novas:					
1st Infantry Division, Clausel	185	3,822	484	3,989	8,480
2nd Infantry Division, Solignac	236	4,761	1,958[2]	3,537	10,492
Cavalry Brigade	86	895	698	238	1,917
Artillery, Train, &c.	23	1,083	24	392	1,522
État-Major	69	—	—	—	69
Corps Total	599	10,561	3,164	8,156	22,480

[1] Including 5/82nd, 528 strong, at Almeida.

[2] Including 4/15th and 3/86th, 1,451 strong, at Ciudad Rodrigo.

	Present under Arms.		*Detached.*	*Sick.*	*Total.*
	Officers.	*Men.*			
Reserve Cavalry, Montbrun .	140	2,729	1,486[1]	178	4,533
Artillery Reserve, Génie, &c. .	42	1,546	219	283	2,090
Gendarmerie	7	190	—	—	197
General État-Major of the Army	66	—	—	—	66
Total . . .	2,127	44,660	9,064	18,873	74,724

Total present under arms of all ranks, 46,787 [Fririon gives only 45,131].

N.B.—The 9,064 detached include 2,854 men left at Rodrigo and Almeida, and 6,210 men left behind in Spain at Salamanca and elsewhere.

Note the terrible proportion of sick in the raw divisions of Junot and Loison, as compared with the lower percentage in the old divisions of Ney's and Reynier's Corps.

9th Corps. Drouet D'Erlon. Head quarters approaching Leiria :					
1st Division of Infantry, Claparéde (at Guarda) .	246	7,617	369	482	8,714
2nd Division of Infantry, Conroux (near Leiria) .	225	7,367	447	1,299	9,338
Cavalry Brigade, Fournier (at the rear)	71	1,627	60	114	1,872
Artillery, Train, &c. . .	13	657	—	72	742
État-Major. . . .	66	—	—	—	66
Corps Total .	621	17,268	876	1,967	20,732

Only Conroux's division being with the main army, its 7,592 effective men alone have to be added to Masséna's force, making a grand total of 54,116 for the available strength of the Marshal on Jan. 1, 1811.

On March 15th the total of 46,787 effectives in the old Army of Portugal had gone down to 44,407 (according to the return in the Paris Archives—Fririon says to only 40,751), though 1,862 drafts were brought up to the front by Foy on Feb. 5. This shows a shrinkage of 4,242 men effective since Jan. 1. But the loss in the sick is terrible—on Jan. 1 there were 18,873; on March 15 only about 6,000 (5,424 in the three army corps; no figures preserved for artillery, train, engineers, gendarmerie, &c.). Apparently multitudes must have perished in hospital during these eleven weeks.

Conroux's division had about 6,400 effectives on March 15, which would make Masséna's effective fighting force on that day 50,807. Claparéde's division (at Guarda and Celorico) was on March 15 about 6,000 strong.

[1] Including five squadrons, 875 strong, left between Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida.

On April 1 the total of 44,407 effectives of the old army on March 15 had gone down to 39,905 present with the colours, not including Conroux and Claparéde.

On April 15 (the retreat having ended on April 5) the total of effectives was 39,546, not including Conroux and Claparéde.

The states of May 1 (Paris Archives) will be found under the Table (No. XII) entitled 'The French Army at Fuentes de Oñoro.'

II

SOULT'S ARMY IN HIS INVASION OF ESTREMADURA (JAN.–MARCH 1811)

	Officers and Men.
5th CORPS. Marshal MORTIER:	
1st Infantry Division (Girard):	
34th, 40th, 64th, 88th Line (three batts. each)	5,835
2nd Infantry Division (Gazan):	
21st and 28th Léger, 100th and 103rd Line (three batts. each)	5,775
Corps-Cavalry (Briche), 21st Chasseurs, 10th Hussars	971
From 1st CORPS:	
63rd Line (three batts.)	1,450
4th, 14th, 26th Dragoons	1,332
2nd Hussars	405
From 4th CORPS: 27th Chasseurs à Cheval	990
Artillery and Train	1,261
Engineers and Sappers	698
4th Spanish Chasseurs à Cheval	246
Gendarmerie	25
État-Major-General	22
General Total	19,010

III

GARRISON OF BADAJOZ, MARCH 4, 1811

(A) ORIGINAL GARRISON OF THE PLACE

	Officers.	*Men.*
2nd of Majorca (two batts.)	43	466
1st of Badajoz (one batt.)	20	376
Provincial de Truxillo (one batt.)	27	694
Provincial de Plasencia (one batt.)	20	687
Dismounted Cavalry, organized in battalions	29	781
Artillery, and detachments lent to the artillery by various corps	45	979
Sappers	6	167
Total	190	4,150

(B) MENDIZABAL'S ARMY OF SUCCOUR

[Present with the Colours, Feb. 1, 1811]

	Officers.	*Men.*
Vanguard Division, Brigadier-General Carlos de España :		
Principe (three batts.), 1st and 2nd of Catalonia, Gerona, Vittoria (one batt. each) . . .	137	2,550
1st Division, Major-General Garcia :		
Leon (three batts.), Regimiento del General (three batts.), La Union (two batts.), 1st of Barcelona, Voluntarios Catalanes, Osuna, Zafra, Valladolid, La Serena (one batt. each), 2nd of Seville (two batts.)	357	5,594
2nd Division, Major-General Virues :		
Rey (two batts.), Princesa (two batts.), Lobera (three batts.), Toledo (two batts.), Zamora (two batts.), Hibernia (two batts.), Fernando 7° (two batts.), Tiradores de Castilla, Voluntarios de Navarra, 1st of Seville (one batt. each) . .	282	4,926
Cavalry, Major-General Butron :		
Carabineros Reales, Reina, Infante, Borbon, Algarve, Sagunto, Lusitania, Hussares de Estremadura, Perseguidores de Andalusia, Imperiales de Toledo, Granaderos de Llerena, Cruzada de Albuquerque [many regiments very weak]. .	387	3,361 [with 2,595 horses]
Artillery, divisional, four batteries [not including men in Badajoz]	19	498
Total	1,182	16,929

N.B.—This total force of 18,111 men did not appear before Badajoz with Mendizabal on February 5th. Fernando 7°, with 800 men, was garrisoning Albuquerque. The 800 dismounted cavalry were at Valencia de Alcantara, their dépôt. 2nd of Seville, with 34 officers and 582 men, had been thrown into Badajoz in January. About 400 cavalry were detached with Ballasteros. Two battalions were garrisoning Campo Mayor. It seems that the actual army of succour consisted of about 2,500 men of Carlos de España's division, 8,500 from those of Garcia and Virues, 2,500 of Butron's cavalry and 450 artillery ; also 950 Portuguese dragoons under Madden.

Osuna, Zafra, Valladolid, and La Serena, with 132 officers and 2,559 men, were drafted into the garrison of Badajoz before the battle of the Gebora, in which they did not take part. The total force present at that fight was about 9,000 infantry and 2,000 Spanish horse, besides Madden's 900 Portuguese dragoons.

IV

GRAHAM'S ARMY AT BARROSA, AND ITS LOSSES

	Officers.	*Men.*	*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		*Total.*
			O.	*M.*	*O.*	*M.*	
Dilkes's Brigade :							
1st Guards, 2nd batt. . .	24	587	1	33	8	177	219
Coldstream Guards, 2nd Batt. (2 comps.) . . .	7	204	1	8	2	47	58
3rd Guards, 2nd Batt. (3 comps.)	8	314	1	14	2	85	102
2 comps. 2/95th Rifles . .	11	206	—	6	—	28	34
Total of Brigade	50	1,311	3	61	12	337	413
Wheatley's Brigade :							
1/28th Foot (8 comps.) . .	20	437	—	6	—	80	86
2/67th Foot	23	504	—	10	4	31	45
2/87th Foot	32	664	1	44	4	124	173
Total of Brigade	75	1,605	1	60	8	235	304
Browne's Flank Battalion (2 comps. each of 1/9th, 1/28th, 2/82nd)	22	514	—	25	11	200	236
Barnard's Flank Battalion (4 comps. 3/95th Rifles, 2 comps. 2/47th)	29	615	2	33	5	97	137
Flank Companies, 20th Portuguese	16	316	—	9	5	42	56
Cavalry, 2 squadrons 2nd Hussars K.G.L.	13	193	—	—	2	32	34
Artillery	20	342	—	6	8	40	54
Royal Engineers	9	50	—	1	—	2	3
Staff Corps	2	35	—	—	—	1	1
Total of Army	236	4,981	6	195	51	986	1,238

Total of force was: Infantry, 4,533; Cavalry, 206; Artillery, 362; Engineers, &c., 96 = Grand Total, 5,217.

N.B.—Of these troops on the field, Dilkes's brigade *minus* the 211 Coldstreamers, but *plus* 260 of the 2/67th and Browne's flank battalion, formed the right column, while Wheatley's brigade, *minus* one wing of the 2/67th, but *plus* the two Coldstream companies and Barnard's flank battalion, was on the left. All the guns were with the latter column. Thus Dilkes's command must have been about 1,950 strong, Wheatley's about 2,883. The cavalry were absent with Whittingham on the coast-road till nearly the end of the engagement.

V

VICTOR'S ARMY AT BARROSA, AND ITS LOSSES

(1) TROOPS ENGAGED AGAINST THE BRITISH

	Present.		*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total.*
	Officers.	*Men.*	*O.*	*M.*	*O.*	*M.*	*O.*	*M.*	
DIVISION RUFFIN:									
2/9th Léger	15	581	1	14	4	70	1	18	103
1/24th and 2/24th Ligne	37	1,156	2	33	7	214	3	21	280
1/96th Ligne . . .	26	738	2	39	6	199	2	1	249
2 provisional batts. of Grenadiers . . .	see note[1]		1	20	5	136	1	59	222
Divisional Total	78	2,475	6	106	22	619	7	99	859
DIVISION LAVAL:									
1/8th and 2/8th Ligne	43	1,425	11	63	11	622	—	19	726
1/45th Ligne . . .	27	683	1	7	—	44	—	3	55
1/54th and 2/54th Ligne	42	1,281	3	26	10	284	—	—	323
Grenadier companies of the 3rd batts. of the 8th, 45th, 54th, 24th, 96th Ligne, and 9th Léger . .	19	530	—	—	—	—	see note[2]		—
Divisional Total	131	3,919	15	96	21	950	—	22	1,104
CAVALRY, 1st Dragoons.	21	377	—	2	6	30	1	3	42
ARTILLERY, 2 batteries.	8	161	1	16	3	31	1	—	52
ÉTAT-MAJOR	?	?	2	—	2	—	1	—	5
General Total	238	6,932	24	220	54	1,630	10	124	2,062

[1] These two battalions were formed of the fourteen grenadier companies of the 1st and 2nd battalions of all the seven regiments of Laval's and Ruffin's divisions, including those of the 16th Léger, absent from the corps. The men are therefore all counted already in their battalions, save those of the 16th Léger, which would probably give 7 officers and 170 men to be added to the above total of 7,170. That these companies of the 16th were present is shown by the fact that two casualties of officers of the regiment are recorded in Martinien's lists at Barrosa.

[2] Losses of these six companies are included among those of the other grenadiers in the return. They were little engaged, and probably lost only 20 or 30 men.

(2) TROOPS ENGAGED AGAINST THE SPANIARDS, IN THE COMBAT BY THE TORRE BERMEJA

	Present.		*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total.*
	Officers.	*Men.*	*O.*	*M.*	*O.*	*M.*	*O.*	*M.*	
DIVISION VILLATTE :									
1/27th and 3/27th Léger	43	982	1	20	7	150	2	21	201
1/94th Ligne	15	535	1	9	3	49	—	—	62
2/95th and 3/95th Ligne	30	1,026	—	1	—	32	—	1	34
CAVALRY, 2nd Dragoons	19	270	—	3	—	12	—	4	19
ARTILLERY, 1 battery	3	75	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
ÉTAT-MAJOR	?	?	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
	110	2,881	2	33	11	243	2	26	317

N.B.—There were absent from their divisions :

(1) With Cassagne at Medina Sidonia—the 2/27th, 3/94th, 2/96th, 1/95th, and a battalion of *voltigeur* companies from the 3rd battalion of the 8th, 24th, 45th, 54th, 96th, and 6th Léger ; also the 5th Chasseurs à Cheval.

(2) Left in garrison in the Cadiz lines—the 1/9th Léger, 2/45th and 2/94th Ligne.

(3) Taken away by Soult—the 63rd Ligne and 16th Léger.

VI

BRITISH LOSSES DURING THE COMBATS 11TH-15TH MARCH, 1811

	Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total.*
	Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	
POMBAL, March 11th :							
1/95th Foot	—	1	1	4	—	—	6
3rd Caçadores	—	10	1	20	—	—	31
Total	—	11	2	24	—	—	37
REDINHA, March 12th :							
Light Division :							
1/43rd Foot	—	—	—	6	—	—	6
1/52nd Foot	—	2	3	21	—	—	26
1/95th Foot	—	—	1	24	—	1	26
3rd Division :							
2/5th Foot	—	3	1	5	—	—	9
1/45th Foot	—	—	1	6	—	—	7
5/60th Foot	—	—	—	10	—	4	14

	Killed.		Wounded.		Missing.		Total.
	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.	
1/88th Foot .	—	—	1	3	—	—	4
1/94th Foot .	—	2	1	13	—	—	16
2/83rd Foot .	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
4th Division :							
2/27th Foot .	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
1/40th Foot .	—	—	—	8	—	—	8
97th Foot . .	—	1	—	6	—	—	7
Cavalry :							
1st Royal Dragoons	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
4th Dragoons .	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Horse Artillery .	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
Portuguese : From 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 6th Caçadores .	—	9	3	51	—	10	73
Total .	—	17	11	163	—	15	206

CAZAL NOVO, and other skirmishes of March 14th :

Light Divison :							
1/43rd Foot .	—	—	3	11	—	—	14
1/52nd Foot .	1	8	3	52	—	1	65
1/95th Foot .	—	3	2	10	—	—	15
3rd Division :							
2/5th Foot . .	—	—	—	8	—	—	8
1/45th Foot .	—	1	—	9	—	1	11
5/60th Foot .	—	—	1	3	—	1	5
74th Foot . .	—	—	1	4	—	—	5
2/83rd Foot .	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
1/88th Foot .	—	—	—	2	—	1	3
1/94th Foot .	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
Portuguese . .	—	2	1	21	—	—	24
Total .	1	14	11	125	—	4	155

FOZ DO AROUCE, March 15th :

Light Division :							
1/52nd Foot .	—	2	—	3	—	—	5
1/95th Foot .	—	—	2	17	—	—	19
3rd Division :							
2/5th Foot . .	—	1	—	7	—	—	8
1/45th Foot .	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
5/60th Foot .	1	3	—	8	—	—	12
74th Foot . .	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
2/83rd Foot .	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
1/88th Foot .	1	—	—	1	—	—	2
1/94th Foot .	—	—	—	6	—	—	6

	Killed. Officers.	Killed. Men.	Wounded. Officers.	Wounded. Men.	Missing. Officers.	Missing. Men.	Total.
1st Division :							
1/79th Foot .	—	1	—	6	—	—	7
2/24th Foot .	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
2/42nd Foot .	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
Portuguese . .	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total .	2	7	2	60	—	—	71

VII

BRITISH LOSSES AT SABUGAL, APRIL 3RD, 1811

	Killed. Officers.	Killed. Men.	Wounded. Officers.	Wounded. Men.	Missing. Officers.	Missing. Men.	Total.
Light Division :							
1/43rd Foot .	1	7	5	67	—	—	80
1/52nd Foot .	—	3	2	18	—	—	23
1/95th Foot .	1	1	2	12	—	1	17
2/95th Foot .	—	1	—	2	—	—	3
3rd Division :							
2/5th Foot . .	—	—	2	6	—	—	8
1/45th Foot .	—	—	—	2	—	1	3
5/60th Foot .	—	2	—	2	—	1	5
2/83rd Foot .	—	—	—	1	—	1	2
1/88th Foot .	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
2/88th Foot .	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
1/94th Foot .	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
Royal Horse Artillery	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
1st Hussars K.G.L.	—	—	—	1	—	1	2
Portuguese . .	—	1	—	9	1[1]	—	11
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total .	2	15	11	128	1	5	162

N.B.—Note that of all the 594 casualties in action during the period of Masséna's retreat all but 65 were in the Light and 3rd Divisions. All the officers killed or wounded belonged to those divisions, except two in the 4th and 6th Portuguese Caçadores wounded at Redinha.

[1] This officer, Colonel Waters, of the Portuguese Staff, was taken prisoner on the Coa many miles from the battlefield, by the outposts of the French 6th Corps.

VIII

FRENCH LOSSES AT SABUGAL, APRIL 3RD, 1811

[FROM A RETURN IN THE MINISTÈRE DE LA GUERRE, PARIS]

	Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total.*
	Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	
2nd Corps. Merle's Division :							
2nd Léger . .	2	7	4	60	3	15	91
36th Ligne . .	1	8	5	63	1	18	96
4th Léger . .	1	1	5	57	1	19	84
Heudelet's Division :							
17th Léger . .	3	13	12	118	—	31	177
70th Ligne . .	6	9	11	122	—	96	244
31st Léger . .	2	2	—	6	—	—	10
47th Ligne . .	—	1	—	6	—	1	8
Cavalry (Pierre Soult):							
1st Hussars . .	—	7	—	4	1	—	12
8th Dragoons .	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
25th Dragoons .	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
22nd Chasseurs .	1	4	—	11	—	—	16
Chasseurs Hanovriens .	—	2	—	6	—	—	8
Artillery . .	1	1	1	7	—	—	10
	17	55	38	464	6	180	760

N.B.—The disproportionate number of wounded to killed among rank and file, 464 to 55, or one to eight, while the normal proportion was about one to five, suggests that some of the numerous 'missing' were really killed. Note the excessive loss among officers, 61 to 699 rank and file, one to eleven instead of the usual one to twenty.

There is some reason to suppose that the figures are incomplete, as Martinien's *Liste des officiers tués et blessés* gives 19 killed and 46 wounded *by name*. We find in these tables the 1st Hussars with an officer killed and three wounded, and the 70th Ligne with seven killed and thirteen wounded, &c.

IX

FORCE OF THE ANGLO-PORTUGUESE ARMY AT FUENTES DE OÑORO

[FROM THE RETURN OF MAY 1]

CAVALRY

Brigadier.	*Regiments.*	*Officers.*	*Sergeants, drummers, and rank and file.*	*Regimental Total.*	*Brigade Total of Effectives.*
Slade	1st Dragoons	24	364	388	766
	14th Light Dragoons	25	353	378	
Arentschildt	16th Dragoons	30	332	362	776
	1st Hussars K.G.L.	30	384	414	
Portuguese Brigade, Barbaçena	4th Line	—	104	104	312[1]
	10th Line	—	208	208	
	Total Cavalry	109	1,745	1,854	1,854

INFANTRY

1st Division. Lieut.-General SIR BRENT SPENCER:

Stopford	3rd Guards, 1st batt.	24	935	959	1,943
	Coldstream G., 1st batt.	31	909	940	
	1 comp. 5/60th Foot	2	42	44	
Nightingale	24th Foot, 2nd batt.	22	349	371	1,774
	42nd ,, ,, ,,	26	419	445	
	79th ,, 1st ,,	39	883	922	
	1 comp. 5/60th Foot	1	35	36	
Howard	50th Foot, 1st batt.	45	552	597	1,934
	71st ,, ,, ,,	42	455	497	
	92nd ,, ,, ,,	41	723	764	
	3/95th Foot, 1 comp.	3	73	76	
Löwe	1st Line Batt. K.G.L.	27	485	512	1,914
	2nd ,, ,,	30	454	484	
	5th ,, ,,	29	393	422	
	7th ,, ,,	21	389	410	
	2 Light Comps. ,,	5	81	86	
	Total 1st Division	388	7,177	7,565	7,565

[1] These Portuguese figures include the officers.

Brigadier.	*Regiments.*	*Officers.*	*Sergeants, drummers, and rank and file.*	*Regimental Total.*	*Brigade Total of Effectives.*
3rd Division. Major-General T. Picton:					
Mackinnon	45th Foot, 1st batt.	24	484	508	1,863
	74th Regiment	24	461	485	
	88th Foot, 2nd batt.	30	657	687	
	3 comps. 5/60th Foot	6	177	183	
Colville	5th Foot, 2nd batt.	28	476	504	1,967
	83rd ,, ,,	33	427	460	
	88th ,, ,,	28	439	467	
	94th Regiment	31	505	536	
Power's Portuguese Brigade	9th Line, 2 batts.	—	910[1]	910	1,650
	21st ,, ,,	—	740[1]	740	
	Total 3rd Division	204	5,276	5,480	5,480
5th Division. Major-General Sir W. Erskine:					
Hay	1st Foot, 3rd batt.	39	633	672	1,770
	9th ,, 1st ,,	28	599	627	
	38th ,, 2nd ,,	21	381	402	
	1 comp. Brunswick Oels	3	66	69	
Dunlop	4th Foot, 1st batt.	34	578	612	1,624
	30th ,, 2nd ,,	23	484	507	
	44th ,, 3rd ,,	27	410	437	
	1 comp. Brunswick Oels	3	65	68	
Spry's Portuguese Brigade	3rd Line, 2 batts.	—	724[1]	724	1,764
	15th ,, ,,	—	556[1]	556	
	8th Caçadores, 1 batt.	—	484[1]	484	
	Total 5th Division	178	4,980	5,158	5,158
6th Division. Major-General Alex. Campbell:					
Hulse	11th Foot, 1st batt.	49	788	837	2,041
	53rd ,, 2nd ,,	21	438	459	
	61st ,, 1st ,,	31	666	697	
	1 comp. 5/60th Foot	2	46	48	
Burne	2nd Foot	30	528	558	1,072
	36th ,, 1st batt.	32	482	514	
Madden's Portuguese Brigade	8th Line, 2 batts.	—	915[1]	915	2,137
	12th ,, ,,	—	1,222[1]	1,222	
	Total 6th Division	165	5,085	5,250	5,250

[1] These Portuguese figures include the officers.

Brigadier.	*Regiments.*	*Officers.*	*Sergeants, drummers, and rank and file.*	*Regimental Total.*	*Brigade Total of Effectives.*
7th Division. Major-General HOUSTON :					
Sontag	51st Foot, 2nd batt.	39	551	590	2,409
	85th Foot	22	365	387	
	Chasseurs Britanniques	31	808	839	
	Brunswick Oels, 8 comps.	32	561	593	
Doyle's (late Collins's) Portuguese Brigade	7th Line, 2 batts.	—	713[1]	713	2,181
	19th ,, ,,	—	1,026[1]	1,026	
	2nd Caçadores, 1 batt.	—	442[1]	442	
	Total 7th Division	124	4,466	4,590	4,590
Light Division. Major-General R. CRAUFURD :					
Beckwith	43rd Foot, 1st batt.	27	727	754	1,184
	95th ,, 1st ,, (4 comps.)	13	341	354	
	95th ,, 2nd ,, (1 comp.)	4	72	76	
Drummond	52nd Foot, 1st batt.	32	803	835	1,734
	52nd ,, 2nd ,,	32	510	542	
	95th ,, 4th ,, (4 comps.)	14	343	357	
Portuguese	1st Caçadores	—	450[1]	450	897
	3rd ,,	—	447[1]	447	
	Total Light Division	122	3,693	3,815	3,815
Ashworth's Portuguese Brigade, unattached	6th Line, 2 batts.	—	986[1]	986	2,539
	18th ,, ,,	—	1,130[1]	1,130	
	6th Caçadores	—	423[1]	423	
ARTILLERY					
English H.A. (Bull's and Ross's troops)		10	157	167	987
,, Field (Lawson's and Thompson's Companies		10	260	270	
Portuguese (4 batteries)		—	550[1]	550	
ENGINEERS		10	30	40	40
TRAIN		15	211	226	226

[1] These Portuguese figures include the officers.

TOTAL

Cavalry	1,854
1st Division	7,565
3rd ,,	5,480
5th ,,	5,158
6th ,,	5,250
7th ,,	4,590
Light ,,	3,815
Ashworth's Portuguese	2,539
Artillery	987
Engineers	40
Train	226
Grand Total	37,504

[Total of Infantry, 34,397.]

N.B.—Pack's Portuguese Brigade and the 2nd regiment from the 6th Division were absent, in charge of the blockade of Almeida.

X

BRITISH LOSSES AT FUENTES DE OÑORO

FIRST DAY, MAY 3RD, 1811

		Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		
1st DIVISION. Spencer:		*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total.*
Nightingale's Brigade	24th Foot, 2nd batt.	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
	42nd ,, ,, ,,	—	1	1	6	—	1	9
	79th ,, 1st ,,	1	4	2	18	—	—	25
Howard's Brigade	30th Foot, 1st batt.	—	—	2	3	—	—	5
	71st ,, ,,	1	7	5	33	—	6	52
	92nd ,, ,,	—	—	1	9	—	—	10
	3/95th Foot, 1 comp.	—	—	1	9	—	—	10
Löwe's Brigade	1st Line batt. K.G.L.	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
	2nd ,, ,,	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
	5th ,, ,,	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
	7th ,, ,,	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
	Light comps. ,,	—	3	—	8	—	—	11
Divisional Total		2	15	12	103	—	7	139
3rd DIVISION. Picton:								
Mackinnon's Brigade	45th Foot, 1st batt.	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
	74th ,, ,,	—	1	—	9	—	—	10
	88th ,, ,,	—	—	—	5	—	—	5
	5/60th Foot, 3 comps.	—	3	2	9	—	8	22
Colville's Brigade	5th Foot, 2nd batt.	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
	83rd ,, ,,	—	—	—	9	—	3	12
	88th ,, ,,	—	—	—	6	—	—	6
	94th ,,	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
Divisional Total		—	4	2	45	—	13	64
CAVALRY:								
Slade's Brigade	1st Dragoons	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	14th Light Dragoons	—	1	—	1	—	1	3
Arentschildt's Brigade	16th Light Dragoons	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1st Hussars K.G.L.	—	—	1	4	—	—	5
British General Total		2	20	15	153	—	21	211
Portuguese loss (nearly all in 6th Caçadores of Ashworth's Brigade)		—	14	6	27	—	1	48
General Total of Allied Loss		2	34	21	180	—	22	259

XI

BRITISH LOSSES AT FUENTES DE OÑORO

SECOND DAY, MAY 5TH, 1811

		Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		
		Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total.*
1st Division.	Spencer :							
Stopford's Brigade	1st Coldstream Guards	—	4	2	49	1	7	63
	1st Scots Fusilier Guards	1	5	1	52	1	12	72
Nightingale's Brigade	24th Foot, 2nd batt.	1	4	—	19	1	4	29
	42nd ,, ,, ,,	—	2	—	23	—	—	25
	79th ,, 1st ,,	—	27	9	126	—	94	256
	50th Foot, 1st batt.	—	3	—	21	—	—	24
Howard's Brigade	71st ,, ,,	2	11	4	71	2	37	127
	92nd ,, ,,	—	7	1	34	—	—	42
	3/95th Foot, 1 comp.	1	1	—	2	—	2	6
Löwe's Brigade	1st Line batt. K.G.L.	—	—	—	2	—	1	3
	2nd ,, ,,	—	2	2	11	—	2	17
	5th ,, ,,	—	—	—	8	—	3	11
	7th ,, ,,	—	1	1	5	—	2	9
	Light comps. ,,	—	—	—	3	—	2	5
	Divisional Total	5	67	20	426	5	166	689
3rd Division.	Picton :							
Mackinnon's Brigade	45th Foot, 1st batt.	—	3	—	1	1		9
	74th ,, ,,	1	2	2	54	—	—	59
	88th ,, ,,	1	1	2	47	—	1	52
	5/60th Foot, 3 comps.	—	—	1	13	—	—	14
Colville's Brigade	5th Foot, 2nd batt.	—	—	—	3	—	—	3
	83rd ,, ,,	1	5	1	28	—	—	35
	88th ,, ,,	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	94th Foot	—	—	1	4	—	—	5
	Divisional Total	3	11	7	150	1	5	177
5th Division.	Erskine :							
Hay's Brigade	1st Foot, 3rd batt.	—	—	—	9	—	—	9
	9th ,, 1st ,,	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
	38th ,, 2nd ,,	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dunlop's Brigade	4th Foot, 1st batt.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	30th ,, 2nd ,,	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
	44th ,, ,, ,,	—	—	—	4	—	—	4
	Divisional Total	—	—	—	21	—	—	21

		Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		
		Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total.*
6th Division. Campbell:								
	No losses whatever . .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th Division. Houston:								
Sontag's Brigade	51st Foot, 2nd batt. . .	—	—	—	5	—	1	6
	85th ,, ,, . .	1	12	3	36	—	43	95
	Chasseurs Britanniques .	—	30	4	17	—	7	58
	Brunswick Oels . . .	—	1	1	6	—	10	18
	Divisional Total	1	43	8	64	—	61	177
Light Division. Craufurd:								
Beckwith's Brigade	43rd Foot, 1st batt. . .	—	—	—	9	—	—	9
	1/95th Foot, 4 comps. .	—	—	—	7	—	—	7
Drummond's Brigade	52nd Foot, 1st batt. . .	—	1	—	6	—	—	7
	52nd ,, 2nd ,, . .	—	—	—	14	—	—	14
	2/95th Foot, 4 comps. .	—	2	—	4	—	—	6
	Divisional Total	—	3	—	40	—	—	43
Cavalry. Stapleton Cotton:								
Slade's Brigade	1st Dragoons	—	4	1	36	—	—	41
	14th Light Dragoons. .	—	3	5	27	—	3	38
Arentschildt's Brigade	16th Light Dragoons. .	—	7	2	16	1	1	27
	1st Hussars K.G.L. . .	—	2	2	39	—	—	43
	Cavalry Total	—	16	10	118	1	4	149
Artillery. Howarth:								
	Horse	—	1	—	1	—	—	2
	Field	—	5	3	18	—	—	26
General Staff		—	—	2	—	—	—	2
British General Total of May 5th . . .		9	146	50	838	7	236	1286
Portuguese losses (mainly in the 2nd and 3rd Caçadores, and 6th and 21st Line)		—	50	7	151	—	51	259
Allied General Total of May 5th . . .		9	196	57	989	7	287	1545
Total of both days, May 3rd and 5th. .		11	230	78	1169	7	309	1804

XII

FRENCH ARMY AT FUENTES DE OÑORO, MAY 3–5, 1811

A. ARMY OF PORTUGAL, STATE OF MAY 1ST

2nd Corps. Reynier.

		Officers.	*Men.*	*Total.*
Division Merle:				
Brigade Sarrut	2nd Léger (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.)	55	1,812	
	36th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.)	55	1,595	
	4th Léger (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.)	61	1,313	
		171	4,720	4,891
Division Heudelet:				
Brigade Godard	17th Léger (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.)	58	1,166	
	70th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.)	52	1,026	
Brigade Arnaud	31st Léger (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.)	55	1,528	
	47th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.)	60	1,546	
		225	5,266	5,491
Cavalry Brigade:				
1st Hussars		9	94	
22nd Chasseurs		27	336	
8th Dragoons		13	203	
		49	633	682
For Artillery, Sappers, Train, &c., see Total of Army.				
	Total of Corps			11,064

6th Corps. Loison.

Division Marchand:				
Brigade Maucune	6th Léger (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.)	43	1,202	
	69th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.)	54	1,537	
Brigade Chemineau	39th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.)	53	1,286	
	76th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.)	64	1,633	
		214	5,658	5,872
Division Mermet:				
Brigade Ménard	25th Léger (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.)	67	1,800	
	27th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.)	57	1,763	
Brigade Taupin	50th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.)	57	1,356	
	59th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.)	53	1,549	
		234	6,468	6,702

Division Ferey:	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total.*
26th Ligne (4th, 5th, 6th batts.)	57	958	
Légion du Midi (1 batt.)	16	369	
Légion Hanovrienne (1 batt.)	19	412	
66th Ligne (4th, 5th, 6th batts.)	63	1,307	
82nd Ligne (4th, 6th batts.[1])	44	987	4,232
	199	4,033	
Light Cavalry Brigade Lamotte:			
3rd Hussars	12	152	
15th Chasseurs	13	157	
	25	309	334

For Artillery, Sappers, Train, &c., see Total of Army.

Total of Corps . . 17,140

8th Corps. Junot. [Clausel's Division absent, guarding Communications.]

Solignac's Division:			
15th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.[2])	55	1,206	
86th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 3rd batts.)	60	1,440	
65th Ligne (1st, 2nd, 4th batts.[2])	51	1,512	
Régiment Irlandais (1 batt.)	18	372	
	184	4,530	4,714

For Artillery, Train, Sappers, &c., see Total of Army.

9th Corps. Drouet.

Claparéde's Division:			
54th Ligne (1 batt.)	14	270	
21st Léger ,,	16	613	
28th Léger ,,	17	457	
40th Ligne ,,	19	500	
63rd Ligne ,,	19	499	
88th Ligne ,,	18	635	
64th Ligne ,,	20	563	
100th Ligne ,,	15	499	
103rd Ligne ,,	18	524	
	156	4,560	4,716

[1] The 5th battalion of the 82nd was in garrison at Almeida.

[2] One battalion of the 15th Ligne, 585 strong, and one battalion of the 65th, 265 strong, and the Régiment de Prusse, 526 strong, were left in garrison at Ciudad Rodrigo. The cavalry brigade of the corps, composed of three provisional regiments of dragoons, was guarding communications.

	Officers.	*Men.*	*Total.*
Conroux's Division :			
16th Léger (1 batt.)	16	593	
9th Léger ,,	21	739	
27th Léger ,,	19	648	
8th Ligne ,,	17	599	
24th Ligne ,,	17	625	
45th Ligne ,,	18	427	
94th Ligne ,,	18	678	
95th Ligne ,,	20	594	
96th Ligne ,,	18	521	
	164	5,424	5,588
Fournier's Cavalry Brigade :			
7th Chasseurs	12	270	
13th Chasseurs	20	250	
20th Chasseurs	16	226	
	48	746	794
For Artillery, Sappers, Train, &c., see Total of Army.			
Total of Corps			11,098
Montbrun's Reserve Cavalry :			
Cavrois's Brigade :			
3rd Dragoons	12	81	
10th Dragoons	12	126	
15th Dragoons	11	219	
Ornano's Brigade :			
6th Dragoons	21	305	
11th Dragoons	11	167	
25th Dragoons	22	200	
	89	1,098	
Total Reserve			1,187

Artillery.

Twelve batteries with 31 officers and 931 men appear in the state of May 1 as totally destitute of horses, and were evidently left in cantonments. Five batteries were taken into the field, with 20 officers, 410 men, and 425 horses.

Engineers, Sappers, Train, Équipages Militaires.

The total strength of the Engineers and Sappers was 34 officers, 1,418 men.
Of the Train . . . . . 17 officers, 1,175 men.
Of the Équipages Militaires . . . . . 6 officers, 361 men.

How many of these were taken into the field it is impossible to say, but if we take the same proportion as in the artillery, viz. about 30 per cent., the total would be about 17 officers and 880 men.

Total Army of Portugal:	*Officers.*	*Men.*
2nd Corps, infantry and cavalry	445	10,619
6th Corps, infantry and cavalry	672	16,468
8th Corps, infantry	184	4,714
9th Corps, infantry and cavalry	368	10,730
Reserve Cavalry	89	1,098
Artillery	20	410
Sappers, Train, &c.	17	880
Total	1,795	44,919

B. ARMY OF THE NORTH, MARSHAL BESSIÈRES

Lepic's Brigade of Guard-Cavalry:	*Officers.*	*Men.*
Lancers	30	340
Chasseurs	13	222
Mamelukes	10	69
Grenadiers à cheval	12	185
	65	816
Wathier's Light Cavalry Brigade:		
11th Chasseurs	11	220
12th Chasseurs	9	172
24th Chasseurs	7	193
5th Hussars	7	165
	34	750
One battery of Artillery	3	70

	Officers.	*Men.*	*Of all Ranks.*
Total Army of the North	102	1,636	
Total Army of Portugal	1,795	44,919	
General Total	1,897	46,555	48,452

N.B.—In Koch's *Life of Masséna* there is a table purporting to be the strength of the Army of Portugal at Fuentes, and making it out to be only about 40,000, excluding gunners, engineers, train, &c., or presumably under 42,000 with them. This is not the May 1st return of the Imperial muster-roll at the *Archives Nationales*, and I do not know what authority it has. The figures given above are those of the official return.

XIII

MASSÉNA'S ORDERS FOR FUENTES DE OÑORO

DISPOSITIONS POUR LA JOURNÉE DU 5

Le 6me Corps se mettra en mouvement demain à 2 heures du matin, à l'exception de la 3me division, qui restera dans la position qu'elle occupe : les deux autres divisions, 1re et 2de, se remueront au soir, en deçà du grand mamelon de Nava de Aver, et en face de Pozzo Bello. Elles seront prêtes à marcher perpendiculairement sur la ligne de l'ennemi ; les deux divisions auront leur artillerie avec elles, et se porteront à la petite pointe du jour, en colonne par divisions, sur le village de Pozzo Bello, pour attaquer l'ennemi dans la position qu'il occupe. La division Ferey, qui occupe une partie du village de Fuentes d'Onoro, fera ses dispositions comme si elle devrait attaquer l'ennemi sur ce point, sauf cependant rien hasarder.

Le 8me Corps se portera sur les hauteurs de Fuentes, et suivra la 2de division du 6me Corps, pour combattre dans le même ordre que ce corps ; il aura avec lui toute son artillerie.

Le 2me Corps observera par sa droite l'important débouché d'Alameda qui conduit au Fort de la Conception : il fera cependant, pour seconder l'attaque de l'armée, une démonstration générale sur la ligne ; il suivra l'ennemi dans tous ses mouvements, c'est-à-dire que si les forces qu'il a devant lui se porteraient au secours du gros de l'armée ennemie, qui est dans la direction de Fuentes d'Onoro, il le suivrait dans sa marche, pour le prendre par sa gauche : tandis que le gros de l'armée, qui l'aurait attaqué par Pozzo Bello, le prendrait par sa droite. Le Général Reynier fera éclairer, s'il le juge nécessaire, par la cavalerie la route du Fort de la Conception. S'il arrivait, ce qui n'est pas à présumer, que l'attaque de Pozzo Bello n'a pas tout le succès que l'on attend, et qu'elle fût repoussée, le Général Reynier ferait sa retraite sur Gallegos. Le Général en chef, qui se trouvera sur sa gauche, l'en ferait prévenir : mais ce serait toujours sur Gallegos, dans le cas où il n'en recevrait pas d'ordre, et après s'être bien assuré que le gros de l'armée serait en pleine retraite.

Le 9me Corps sera rendu avant le jour devant Fuentes d'Onoro, où il se mettra en bataille sur deux lignes, laissant une grande distance par régiment, pour donner à croire à l'ennemi que le 6me Corps occupe toujours la même position.

L'armée est prévenue que le Prince Général en chef se trouvera au 8me Corps.

M. le Général Montbrun, ayant sous ses ordres la réserve de dragons, la brigade Fournier, et la brigade Wathier, se placera à la gauche du 6me Corps, pour tourner les positions de l'ennemi et le prendre par la droite.

La Garde Impériale, qui est arrivée ce soir, coopéra demain à tous les mouvements de l'armée.

MASSÉNA.

XIV

FRENCH LOSSES AT FUENTES DE OÑORO

N.B.—I have been unable to find any detailed table by regiments in the *Archives de la Guerre*, or the *Archives Nationales* at Paris, and can only give the subjoined table of losses by corps.

COMBAT OF MAY 3RD.

	Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total.*
	Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	
6th Corps (Divisions Ferey and Marchand)	7	69	17	392	3	164	652

BATTLE OF MAY 5TH.

2nd Corps (all in 31st Léger) .	—	3	3	46	—	—	52
6th Corps (Divisions Ferey, Marchand, Mermet) . . .	12	95	47	757	—	33	944
8th Corps (Division Solignac) .	—	2	—	—	—	—	2
9th Corps (Divisions Conroux and Claparéde) . . .	15	103	48	669	—	—	835
Montbrun's Cavalry . .	1	36	25	283	1	13	359
Total . .	35	308	140	2,147	4	210	2,844

So far as this return can be tested by Martinien's *Liste des Officiers tués et blessés pendant les Guerres de l'Empire*, it appears to be very fairly accurate; Martinien accounts for 171 casualties, the return for 179. In detail the figures compare as follows:—

	Killed.	*Wounded.*		*Killed.*	*Wounded.*	*Missing.*
2nd Corps, Martinien	0	4	In return	0	3	—
6th Corps, Martinien	22	63	In return	19	64	3
9th Corps, Martinien	14	41	In return	15	48	—
Cavalry, Martinien .	1	26	In return	1	25	1
Totals .	37	134	.	35	140	4

XV

BERESFORD'S ARMY AT ALBUERA, AND ITS LOSSES

I. BRITISH TROOPS

	Present.		*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total Loss.*
2nd Division (William Stewart):	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	
Colborne's Brigade 1/3rd Foot	27	728	4	212	14	234	2	177	643
Colborne's Brigade 2/31st Foot	20	398	—	29	7	119	—	—	155
Colborne's Brigade 2/48th Foot	29	423	4	44	10	86	9	190	343
Colborne's Brigade 2/66th Foot	24	417	3	52	12	104	—	101	272
Total of Brigade	100	1,966	11	337	43	543	11	468	1,413
Hoghton's Brigade 29th Foot	31	476	5	75	12	233	—	11	336
Hoghton's Brigade 1/48th Foot	33	464	3	64	13	194	—	6	280
Hoghton's Brigade 1/57th Foot	31	616	2	87	21	318	—	—	428
Total of Brigade	95	1,556	10	226	46	745	—	17	1,044
Abercrombie's Brigade 2/28th Foot	28	491	—	27	6	131	—	—	164
Abercrombie's Brigade 2/34th Foot	28	568	3	30	4	91	—	—	128
Abercrombie's Brigade 2/39th Foot	33	449	1	14	4	77	—	2	98
Total of Brigade	89	1,508	4	71	14	299	—	2	390
Divisional Light Troops: 3 comps. 5/60th Foot	4	142	—	2	1	18	—	—	21
Total 2nd Division	288	5,172	25	636	104	1,605	11	487	2,868
4th Division (Cole):									
Myers's Brigade 1/7th Fusiliers	27	687	—	65	15	277	—	—	357
Myers's Brigade 2/7th Fusiliers	28	540	2	47	13	287	—	—	349
Myers's Brigade 1/23rd R.W. Fusiliers	41	692	2	74	11	246	—	6	339
Total of Brigade	96	1,919	4	186	39	810	—	6	1,045
Kemmis's Brigade, detachment of one company each of 2/27th, 1/40th, 97th Foot	8	157	1	5	—	14	—	—	20
Total 4th Division	104	2,076	5	191	39	824	—	6	1,065
Alten's Independent Brigade:									
1st Light Batt. K.G.L.	23	565	—	4	4	59	—	2	69
2nd ditto	19	491	1	3	1	31	—	1	37
Total of Brigade	42	1,056	1	7	5	90	—	3	106

	Present.		*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total Loss.*
CAVALRY (Lumley):	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	
De Grey's Brigade — 3rd Dragoon Guards	23	351	1	9	—	9	—	1	20
De Grey's Brigade — 4th Dragoons	30	357	—	3	2	18	2	2	27
13th Light Dragoons	23	380	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Total Cavalry	76	1,088	1	12	2	28	2	3	48
ARTILLERY:									
British (Batteries of Lefebure and Hawker)	9	246	—	3	1	10	—	1	15
K.G.L. (Batteries of Cleeves and Sympher)	10	282	—	—	1	17	1	30	49
STAFF	?	?	1	—	7	—	—	—	8
Grand Total of British	529	9,920	33	849	159	2,574	14	530	4,159

II. PORTUGUESE TROOPS

	Officers and Men.	*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total Loss.*
		Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	
Harvey's Brigade (4th Division) — 11th Regt. (2 batts.)	1,154	—	2	2	4	—	5	13
Harvey's Brigade (4th Division) — 23rd Regt. (2 batts.)	1,201	1	3	1	14	—	—	19
Harvey's Brigade (4th Division) — 1st Batt. L.L.L. (1 batt.)	572	—	66	6	89	—	10	171
Hamilton's Division — 2nd Line (2 batts.)	1,225	—	3	—	5	—	—	8
Hamilton's Division — 14th Line (2 batts.)	1,204	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
Hamilton's Division — 4th Line (2 batts.)	1,271	—	9	1	50	—	—	60
Hamilton's Division — 10th Line (2 batts.)	1,119	—	—	—	11	—	—	11
Collins's Brigade — 5th Line (2 batts.)	985	—	10	4	36	—	10	60
Collins's Brigade — 5th Caçadores (1 batt.)	400	—	5	—	25	—	1	31
Cavalry (Otway) — 1st Regt.	327	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cavalry (Otway) — 7th Regt.	314	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
Cavalry (Otway) — 5th Regt. (1 squad.)	104	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cavalry (Otway) — 8th Regt. do.	104	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Artillery (batteries of Arriaga and Braun)	221	—	2	—	8	—	—	10
Staff	?	1	—	1	—	—	—	2
Grand Total of Portuguese	10,201	2	100	15	246	—	26	389

GRAND TOTAL OF BERESFORD'S ARMY

Infantry . . . British, 8,738; Portuguese, 9,131 = 17,869
Cavalry . . . British, 1,164; Portuguese, 849 = 2,013
Artillery . . . British, 255; Portuguese, 221 = 476

Grand Total . . . . . 20,358 of all arms.

General Total of Losses: British, 4,159; Portuguese, 389 = 4,548.

III. SPANISH TROOPS[1]

(1) BLAKE'S ARMY	*Present.*		*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		
	Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total Loss.*
VANGUARD DIVISION (Lardizabal):							
Murcia (2 batts.), Canarias, 2nd of Leon, Campo Mayor	107	2,291	4	59	13	215	291
3rd DIVISION (Ballasteros):							
1st of Catalonia, Barbastro, Pravia, Lena, Castropol, Cangas de Tineo, Infiesto	154	3,371	3	64	15	193	275
4th DIVISION (Zayas):							
2nd and 4th Spanish Guards, Irlanda, Patria, Toledo, Legion Estranjera, 4th Walloon Guards, Ciudad Real	197	4,685	—	106	26	549	681[2]
CAVALRY (Loy):							
Santiago, Husares de Castilla, Granaderos, Escuadron de Instrucion	93	1,072	—	7	2	31	40
ARTILLERY (1 battery)	7	96	—	2	—	7	9
STAFF	?	?	2	—	9	—	11
Total of Blake's troops	558	11,515	9	238	65	995	1,307
(2) CASTAÑOS'S ARMY							
Carlos de España's INFANTRY:							
3 batts., Rey, Zamora, Voluntarios de Navarra, 1 company Sappers	57	1,721	—	—	4	29	33
Penne Villemur's CAVALRY:							
Detachments of seven regiments, none over 1 squadron strong	87	634	—	11	3	14	28
ARTILLERY (1 battery)	4	58	—	—	—	—	—
Total of Castaños's Troops	148	2,413	—	11	7	43	61
Grand Total of Spaniards	706	13,928	9	249	72	1,038	1,368

GRAND TOTAL OF THE ALLIED ARMY

British	Present of all arms, 10,449	Losses,	4,159
Portuguese	,, ,, 10,201	,,	389
Spaniards	,, ,, 14,634	,,	1,368
Total	35,284		5,916

[1] The return of losses is confused, there being mixtures of units, and some errors between officers and rank and file. It seems unlikely that Zayas's division had 26 officers wounded and none killed. I have endeavoured to reconstruct items as far as possible. For the confused table see Arteche, vol. x. p. 524.

[2] Of this 681 no less than 98 killed and 517 wounded are in the four battalions of the Spanish Guards and Irlanda, which fought so long against Girard's division. The other five battalions only lost 66 men between them.

XVI

SOULT'S ARMY AT ALBUERA, AND ITS LOSSES

[The strength from a return of May 1st, filed under June 1st, in the *Archives Nationales*. The losses from a return in the *Archives de la Guerre*, dated July 19th.]

INFANTRY[1]	*Present.*		*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		
5th Corps.	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total Losses.*
1st Division (Girard):									
34th Line (2nd and 3rd batts.)	23	930	4	104[2]	13	298	—	—	419
40th Line (1st and 2nd batts.)	35	778	4	35	9	226	1	73	348
64th Line (1st, 2nd, and 3rd batts.)	50	1,539	5	99	18	361	—	168	651
88th Line (2nd and 3rd batts.)	21	878	—	—	5	253	6	141[3]	405
2nd Division (Gazan):									
21st Léger (2nd and 3rd batts.)	43	745	3	61	11	154	2	24	255
100th Line (1st and 2nd batts.)	33	705	4	50	8	152	2	51	267
28th Léger (1st, 2nd, and 3rd batts.)	62	1,305	7	53	10	313	1	112	496
103rd Line (1st, 2nd, and 3rd batts.)	38	1,252	4	48	10	148	3	74	287
Total 5th Corps	305	8,132	31	450	84	1,905	15	643	3,128
Werlé's Brigade:									
12th Léger (1st, 2nd, and 3rd batts.)	62	2,102	3	108	14	511	1	132	769
55th Line (1st, 2nd, and 3rd batts.)	58	1,757	4	68	6	235	—	38	351
58th Line (1st, 2nd, and 3rd batts.)	55	1,587	6	23	15	258	2	24	328
Brigade Total	175	5,446	13	199	35	1,004	3	194	1,448
Godinot's Brigade:									
16th Léger (1st, 2nd, and 3rd batts.)	49	1,624	2	39	7	321	—	12	381
51st Line (1st, 2nd, and 3rd batts.)	65	2,186	—	2	—	1	—	—	3
Brigade Total	114	3,810	2	41	7	322	—	12	384
Grenadiers Réunis of 45th, 63rd, 95th Line, of 1st Corps, and 4th Poles of 4th Corps (11 comps.)[4]	33	1,000	Only gross total of losses given.						372 (10 officers and 362 men)
Total Infantry	627	18,388	46	690	126	3,230	18	849	5,332

[1] The 1/34th, 3/40th, 1/88th, 1/21st Léger, 3/100th were separated from their regiments, and garrisoned Badajoz.

[2] The 34th regiment returned, as is clear, all its missing as killed.

[3] The 88th regiment returned, as is clear, all its killed as missing.

[4] This assemblage of Grenadier companies can be identified, as to its units, by the fact that in Martinien's lists of killed and wounded, we find names of officers of the 45th, 63rd, 95th, and 4th Poles, none of which were present at Albuera. He accounts from these regiments for 4 officers killed and 9 wounded (45th 5 officers, 63rd 2 officers, 95th 1 officer, Poles 5 officers).

	Present.		*Killed.*		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		*Total Losses.*
	Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	
CAVALRY (Latour-Maubourg).									
Briche's Brigade:									
2nd Hussars . . .	23	282	1	4	3	57	—	8	73
10th Hussars . . .	24	238	1	3	4	21	—	3	32
21st Chasseurs . . .	21	235	—	3	3	19	—	—	25
Bron's Brigade:									
4th Dragoons . . .	21	385	3	27	1	38	—	1	70
20th Dragoons . . .	22	244	1	6	3	10	1	4	25
26th Dragoons . . .	27	394	1	5	2	12	—	1	21
Bouvier des Éclats's Brigade:									
14th Dragoons . . .	17	299	—	6	1	17	—	—	24
17th Dragoons . . .	17	297	—	12	3	29	—	1	45
27th Dragoons . . .	14	235	—	2	3	11	—	3	19
Unattached Cavalry:									
1st Lancers of the Vistula	28	563	1	41	9	78	1	—	130
27th Chasseurs . . .	22	409	—	7	2	11	1	5	26
4th Spanish Chasseurs	14	181	—	2	—	4	—	—	6
Cavalry Total .	250	3,762	8	118	34	307	3	26	496
ARTILLERY GÉNIE TRAIN:									
Of 5th Corps . . .	18	590	1	19	3	72	—	—	95
Of other Units . . .	25	600	No returns whatever.						?
ÉTAT MAJOR	?	?	5	—	8	—	—	—	13
Total of Army .	920	23,340	60	827	171	3,610	21	875	5,936

Return of casualties is signed Mocquery, 19 Juillet 1811.

Total present, 24,260. Total losses, 5,936.

N.B.—The losses cannot be quite complete. Not only is the return for artillery and engineers, &c., for all units except the 5th Corps missing, but Martinien's lists, which are absolutely secure evidence, since they give the name and regiment of every officer hit, show much larger totals than this report, 362 casualties instead of 241. This enormous difference of 121 casualties among officers, reported in the regimental lists, but ignored by Soult, cannot be explained away by adding the 21 prisoners to his total of 241, granting that all the prisoners were wounded. This still leaves a balance of 100 unaccounted for. The details of difference and of total casualties are :—

	Soult.	*Martinien.*		*Soult.*	*Martinien.*		*Soult.*	*Martinien.*
Staff . . .	13	27	55th	10	14	14th Dragoons	1	1
34th	17	15	58th	23	24	17th Dragoons	3	6
40th	14	23	16th Léger .	9	17	27th Dragoons	3	5
64th	23	26	Grenadiers .	10	13	1st Lancers .	11	14
88th	11	12	2nd Hussars .	4	5	27th Chasseurs	3	3
21st Léger .	16	13	10th Hussars .	5	7	4th Spanish Chasseurs .	—	3
100th . . .	14	20	21st Chasseurs	3	5	Artillery Génie Train	4	6
28th Léger .	18	30	4th Dragoons	4	11		262	362
103rd Ligne .	17	18	20th Dragoons	5	12			
12th Léger .	18	29	26th Dragoons	3	3			
Carry forward	161	213	Carry forward	237	324			

See notes in text above, p. 395.

XVII

THE SPANISH ARMIES IN 1811

By the kindness of Commandant Figueras of the Department of Archives in the War Ministry at Madrid, I am able to give the following sets of figures for the armies in the summer campaign of 1811. Unfortunately there is none for the Army of Catalonia ('1st Army' or 'Army of the Right') whose main body was destroyed at Tarragona in July. The others work out as follows :—

2ND ARMY, OR ARMY OF VALENCIA. General Charles O'Donnell.

	Officers.	*Men.*		
1st Division : Major-General José Miranda . . .	192	4,863 =	5,055	present under arms.
2nd Division : Major-General Conde de Romré . .	108	2,892 =	3,000	,,
3rd Division : Major-General Luis Bassecourt . .	47	2,006 =	2,053	,,
4th Division : Major-General José Obispo . . .	226	4,933 =	5,159	,,
Flying Column of the Empecinado	?	3,220 =	3,220	,,
Reserve (new levies) : Major-General B. Acuña . .	59	3,640 =	3,699	,,
Artillery	22	472 =	494	,,
Engineers	10	218 =	228	,,
June 1st, Field Army. Total	664	22,244 =	22,908	,,
Garrisons of Saguntum, Oropesa, Peniscola . . .	55	1,944 =	1,999	,,

N.B.—The cavalry regiments were not brigaded, but distributed among the divisions, each having one regiment, save Miranda's division, which had two. Total about 2,565 sabres.

3rd Army, or Army of Murcia. General Manuel Freire.

	Officers.	*Men.*		
1st Division: Brigadier-Gen. A. La Cuadra	163	3,852 =	4,015	present under arms.
2nd Division: Brigadier-Gen. Juan Creagh	166	4,276 =	4,442	,,
3rd Division: Brigadier-Gen. Antonio Sanz	146	3,074 =	3,220	,,
1st Cavalry Division: Brigadier-Gen. M. Ladron	129	885 =	1,014	,,
2nd ditto: Brigadier-Gen. V. Osorio	80	629 =	709	,,
Artillery	35	751 =	786	,,
Engineers	22	245 =	267	,,
June 1st, Total Field Army	741	13,712 =	14,453	,,
Garrison of Cartagena	116	2,064 =	2,180	,,

5th Army, or Army of Estremadura. General Francisco Xavier Castaños.

	Officers.	*Men.*		
1st Division: Brigadier-Gen. Carlos de España	143	3,333 =	3,476	present under arms.
Cavalry Brigade: Conde de Penne Villemur	79	618 =	697	,,
Artillery	20	448 =	468	,,
Engineers	2	98 =	100	,,
June 1st, Total Field Army	244	4,497 =	4,741	,,
Garrisons of Albuquerque, Valencia de Alcantara, &c.	165	2,688 =	2,853	,,

6th Army, or Army of Galicia. General Santocildes, vice General Abadia.

1st Division: Major-General Losada (Asturians)	5,459	present under arms.
2nd Division: Major-General Taboada	3,994	,,
3rd Division: Major-General Cabrera	2,567	,,
Reserve at Lugo	2,654	,,
Cavalry	631	,,
	15,305	

No figures for garrisons of Ferrol, Vigo, and Corunna, but they are believed to have amounted to about 5,500 men.

XVIII

THE FRENCH ARMY IN SPAIN, JULY 15, 1811

[From the returns in the *Archives Nationales*, Paris.]

I. ARMY OF THE SOUTH. MARSHAL SOULT.

1ST CORPS. Marshal Victor (including battalions of 9th Corps incorporated on June 28).

Division Conroux: 9th Léger (4 batts.), 24th, 96th Ligne (3 batts. each)	5,905	present
Division Godinot: 8th Ligne (4 batts.), 16th Léger, 45th, 54th Ligne (3 batts. each)	8,133	,,
Division Villatte: 27th Léger, 63rd, 94th, 95th Ligne (3 batts. each)	5,802	,,
Perreymond's Light Cavalry: 2nd Hussars, 5th Chasseurs	1,015	,,
Latour-Maubourg's Dragoons: 1st, 2nd, 4th, 9th, 14th, 26th regiments	2,905	,,
Artillery and Engineers, &c.	1,985	,,
Marines and sailors of Cadiz Lines flotilla	1,456	,,
	27,201	

Gross total of Corps with sick and detached added is 35,940.

4TH CORPS. General Sebastiani (including battalions incorporated from 9th Corps).

Division Ligier-Belair: 12th Léger (3 batts.), 32nd, 43rd, 58th Ligne (4 batts. each)	10,947	present
Division Dembouski: 4th, 7th, 9th Poles (2 batts. each)	4,918	,,
Ormancey's Light Cavalry: 10th Chasseurs, 1st Lancers of the Vistula	1,595	,,
Milhaud's Dragoons: 5th, 12th, 16th, 20th, 21st regiments	2,484	,,
Artillery and Engineers	886	,,
	20,830	

Gross total of Corps with sick and detached added is 22,889.

5TH CORPS. Count Drouet D'Erlon (including battalions incorporated from 9th Corps).

Division Girard: 34th, 40th Ligne (2 batts. each), 64th, 88th Ligne (3 batts. each)	4,253	present
Division Claparéde: 21st, 28th Léger, 100th, 103rd Ligne (3 batts. each)	4,183	,,
[Not including 1 batt. each of 34th, 40th, 88th, 100th Ligne, and 21st Léger in garrison at Badajoz.]		
Briche's Light Cavalry: 10th Hussars, 21st Chasseurs	515	,,
Artillery and Engineers [not including Badajoz garrison]	618	,,
Garrison of Badajoz (5 battalions and detachments of artillery, &c.)	2,887	,,
	12,456	

Gross total of Corps with sick and detached added is 22,296.

N.B.—This enormous proportion of absentees is largely due to the Albuera wounded, who had not yet rejoined.

Troops not included in the three Corps:

Brigade in the Kingdom of Cordova: 51st, 55th Ligne (3 batts. each)	5,017	present
Unattached Cavalry: 17th, 27th Dragoons, 27th Chasseurs, 4th Spanish Chasseurs	1,942	,,
Unattached Artillery, Engineers, Train, &c.	1,381	,,

Total Army of the South, 68,827 present under arms.

Gross total, including sick and detached, 90,186.

II. ARMY OF THE CENTRE. KING JOSEPH.

The King's French Guards, no figures given, but about	2,500	present
Spanish Division Hugo (10 battalions, 3 squadrons)	5,060	,,
Brigade Dessolles: 75th Ligne (3 batts.), 28th Ligne (2½ batts.)	3,208	,,
German Division: 2nd Nassau and Baden (2 batts. each), Frankfort (1 batt.), 123rd Ligne (late Dutch 2nd regt.)[1]	4,214	,,
Treillard's Light Horse: Westphalian and Nassau Chasseurs	663	,,
Lahoussaye's Dragoons: 13th, 18th, 19th, 22nd regts.	2,213	,,
Artillery and Engineers, &c.	1,268	,,
Drafts for Armies of South and Portugal at Madrid, &c.	4,013	,,
	23,139	

Gross total of Army, with sick and detached, 25,537.

[1] Regiment of Hesse-Darmstadt about 1,000 bayonets is detached, on its way to join the Badajoz garrison.

III. ARMY OF PORTUGAL.[1] MARSHAL MARMONT, DUKE OF RAGUSA.

Division Foy: 6th Léger, 39th, 69th, 76th Ligne (3 batts. each)	5,541	present
Division Clausel: 25th Léger, 27th, 50th, 59th Ligne (3 batts. each)	6,501	,,
Division Ferey: 31st Léger, 47th, 70th Ligne (3 batts. each), 26th (2 batts.)	5,072	,,
Division Sarrut: 2nd and 4th Léger, 36th Ligne (3 batts. each)	4,922	,,
Division Maucune: 15th, 66th, 82nd, 86th Ligne (3 batts. each)	5,049	,,
Division Brennier: 17th Léger (3 batts.), 22nd Ligne (4 batts.), 65th Ligne (3 batts.), Irlandais and Regiment de Prusse (1 batt. each)	5,332	,,
Lamotte's Light Cavalry: 1st and 3rd Hussars, 15th and 22nd Chasseurs	613	,,
Fournier's Light Cavalry: 7th, 17th, 20th Chasseurs	701	,,
Wathier's Light Cavalry: 11th and 24th Chasseurs, 5th Hussars	564	,,
Montbrun's Dragoons: 3rd, 6th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 25th regts.	1,463	,,
Artillery, Train, Engineers, &c.	2,875	,,
Total	38,633	

Gross Total of Army, with sick (12,668) and detached, 57,949.

IV. ARMY OF ARAGON. MARSHAL SUCHET.

Division Musnier: 1st Léger, 114th and 121st Ligne (3 batts. each), 1st Vistula (2 batts.)	7,689	present
Division Frère: 14th and 42nd Ligne (3 batts. each), 115th (4 batts.), 2nd Vistula (2 batts.)	7,826	,,
Division Harispe: 7th Ligne (4 batts.), 116th (3 batts.), 44th, and 3rd Vistula (2 batts. each)	6,380	,,
Division Habert: 5th Léger (2 batts.), 16th and 117th Ligne (3 batts. each)	4,433	,,
Italian Division Peyri: 1st and 2nd Léger, 4th, 5th, and 6th Line (2 batts. each), Dragons Napoléon, Chasseurs Royaux (2 squadrons each)	4,892	,,
Neapolitan Brigade Compère: 1st and 2nd Ligne, 1st Léger (1 batt. each), and 2 squadrons of Chasseurs	1,808	,,
Boussard's Cavalry Brigade: 13th Cuirassiers, 4th Hussars, 24th Dragoons	1,876	,,

[1] Garrison of Rodrigo (1 batt. each of 26th, 65th, 66th, Légion du Midi, and Regiment de Prusse, making 1,997 men) is included under the divisional figures above.

Artillery, Engineers, Train, &c.	3,645	present
Garrisons	2,244	,,
Drafts on the march	2,990	,,
Total . .	43,783	

Gross Total of Army with sick and detached, 51,088.

V. ARMY OF THE NORTH. General Dorsenne.

(*a*) Imperial Guard, Divisions Dumoustier and Roguet, 4 regiments of Voltigeurs, 4 of Tirailleurs, 1 of Chasseurs, 1 of Fusiliers-Chasseurs, 1 *bataillon de marche* .	15,166	present
Lepic's Guard Cavalry	1,189	,,
Cavalry attached (Lancers of Berg)	835	,,
Guard Artillery, &c.	878	,,
(*b*) Navarre, Division Reille, 10th, 21st, 81st Ligne (4 batts. each), 60th Ligne (3 batts.)	8,221	,,
Navarre, over and above Reille, garrisons, and drafts .	1,623	,,
Biscay, Division Caffarelli: 10th Léger (4 batts.), 5th Léger, 3rd, 52nd, 105th Ligne (3 batts. each) . .	7,543	,,
Biscay, over and above Caffarelli, 130th Léger (3 batts.), and drafts, &c.	4,340	,,
Burgos, Division Souham: 1st, 62nd, 101st Ligne (4 batts. each), 23rd Léger (2 batts.)	7,971	,,
Burgos, over and above Souham, provisional battalions, garrisons, and drafts	8,714	,,
Valladolid and Salamanca, Division Serras: 113th Ligne (2 batts.), 12th Léger, 2nd and 4th Swiss, Garde de Paris (1 batt. each), and cavalry, &c. . . .	5,063	,,
Valladolid and Salamanca, over and above Serras, 34th Ligne (3 batts.), 4th Vistula (2 batts.), Neuchatel (1 batt.), 6 *bataillons de marche*, and cavalry attached	8,106	,,
Asturias, Division Bonnet: 118th, 119th, 122nd Ligne (3 batts. each), 120th Ligne (4 batts.) . . .	7,962	,,
Artillery, Engineers, &c., in the five governments named above	2,367	,,
Italian Division Severoli (destined for Suchet's Army): 1st and 2nd Léger, 4th and 6th Ligne (1 batt. each), 1st and 7th Ligne (3 batts. each)	7,661	,,
Italian Artillery, Engineer, and Cavalry Drafts with Severoli	803	,,
Total . .	88,442	

Gross Total of Army, including sick and detached, 99,442.

VI. ARMY OF CATALONIA. MARSHAL MACDONALD.

Division Maurice Mathieu: 5th Ligne (3 batts.), 18th Léger, 23rd and 56th Ligne (1 batt. each), 1st of Nassau (2 batts.)	5,411	present
Division Quesnel: 79th Ligne (3 batts.), 23rd Léger (2 batts.), 93rd Ligne (1 batt.), 29th Chasseurs (3 squadrons)	3,890	,,
Division Plauzonne: 3rd Léger (4 batts.), 11th Ligne (3 batts.), 32nd Léger (1 batt.)	4,389	,,
Brigade Petit: 67th Ligne (4 batts.), 16th and 81st Ligne (1 batt. each)	2,416	,,
Brigade Lefebvre: 8th Léger, 37th and 60th Ligne (1 batt. each), regiment of Westphalia, and 3 provisional battalions	3,725	,,
Garrison of Montlouis: Würzburg and 2nd Swiss (1 batt. each)	1,429	,,
Garrison of Rosas	477	,,
Garrison of Gerona: 102nd Ligne (2 batts.), Berg and Valais (1 batt. each)	1,429	,,
Artillery, Engineers, &c.	824	,,
Total	23,590	

Gross Total of Army, including sick and detached, 30,259.

GENERAL TOTAL OF FRENCH ARMY IN SPAIN

	Present under Arms.	*Gross Total.*
Army of the South	68,827	90,186
Army of the Centre	23,139	25,537
Army of Portugal	38,633	57,949
Army of Aragon	48,783	51,088
Army of the North	88,442	99,442
Army of Catalonia	23,590	30,259
	291,414	354,461

Not including General Monthion's 'Reserve of the Army of Spain' at Bayonne, with 251 officers and 8,047 men.

XIX

THE FRENCH AND SPANISH FORCES AT THE SIEGE OF TARRAGONA

I. SUCHET'S ARMY

N.B.—The divisional and brigade organization is provisional; compare for theoretical organization, p. 640.

Frère's Division: 1st Léger (3 batts.), 1st of the Vistula (2 batts.), 14th Ligne (1 batt.), 42nd Ligne (3 batts.) .	4,821	present
Harispe's Division: 7th and 16th Ligne (3 batts. each), Italian 2nd Léger and 4th, 5th, 6th Ligne (2 batts. each)	6,561	,,
Habert's Division: 5th Léger, 116th and 117th Ligne (2 batts. each)	3,088	,,
Abbé's Brigade (arrived in June): 114th, 115th, 121st Ligne (2 batts. each)	3,657	,,
Total Infantry . .	18,127	
Boussard's Cavalry: 24th Dragoons, 13th Cuirassiers (3 squadrons each), 4th Hussars, Italian Dragons de Napoléon (2 squadrons each)	1,447	,,
Artillery and Artillery Train	1,352	,,
Engineers and Train	708	,,
General Total . .	21,634	

II. THE SPANISH GARRISON

There are unfortunately no figures forthcoming at Madrid for the Army of Catalonia between December 10th, 1810, and August 1811, all apparently having been lost or destroyed at the siege of Tarragona. In December the Army of Catalonia had consisted of—Sarsfield's Division, 5,462 men present; Courten's, 4,791 men present; Eroles's, 2,538 men present; garrisons (Tortosa, Tarragona, Seu d'Urgel, &c.), 13,040 = Total 25,651.

Of these there seem to have been present in Tarragona, in May and June, the whole of Courten's division, presumably still somewhat under 5,000 men (regiments of America, Granada, Almanza, and Almeria, 9 batts.), a sedentary garrison composed of 6 battalions of the new Catalan 'sections' or local line and a few other troops, and the greater part of Sarsfield's division, sent in by Campoverde on June 10th, with some small succours sent from Valencia and elsewhere. The whole must have made up some 15,000 men, though such a number was not present at any one

time within the walls. According to Suchet's surrender-roll of the garrison (see Belmas, iii. 601) there were still 8,000 men surviving at the moment of the storm, June 28th, 1811, viz.:—

Courten's Division:		Sedentary Garrison:	
America	351	Catalan 'Sections'	1,936
Almanza	613	Tarragona	125
Almeria	464	Artillery	793
Granada	365	Sappers and Engineers	166
	1,793		3,020

Other Troops (mainly from Sarsfield's Division):			
Santa Fé	343	Cazadores de Valencia	664
2nd of Savoia	655	Grenadiers	164
Iliberia	368	Miscellaneous detachments	
Saragossa	280	and isolated officers	70
Gerona	241	Cavalry	166
1st of Savoia	502		3,453

General Total . . . . 8,266.

XX

WELLINGTON'S ARMY ON THE BEIRA FRONTIER

[FROM THE RETURN OF SEPTEMBER 15, 1811.]

BRITISH CAVALRY (STAPLETON COTTON)

Slade's Brigade	1st Royal Dragoons	406
	12th Light Dragoons	372
Alten's Brigade	11th Light Dragoons	377
	1st Hussars K.G.L.	413
Anson's Brigade	14th Light Dragoons	344
	16th Light Dragoons	373
De Grey's Brigade[1]	3rd Dragoon Guards	369
	4th Dragoons	358

Total British Cavalry, 161 officers, 2,851 men = 3,012.

[1] De Grey's brigade properly belonged to Erskine's 2nd Cavalry Division, absent with Hill in Estremadura. But Wellington had called it up to the main army when Le Marchant's heavy dragoons arrived at Lisbon, and sent the latter to Castello Branco, as part of Hill's corps.

BRITISH INFANTRY

1st Division. Lieut.-General Sir Thomas Graham.

H. Campbell's Brigade	1st Coldstream Guards	877
	1st Scots Fusilier Guards	886
	1 comp. 5/60th Foot	48
Stopford's Brigade	2/24th Foot	300
	1/26th Foot	538
	2/42nd Foot	368
	1/79th Foot	374
	1 comp. 5/60th Foot	38
Löwe's Brigade	1st Line battalion K.G.L.	533
	2nd ditto	502
	5th ditto	462

Total 1st Division = 4,926.

3rd Division. Major-General T. Picton.

Wallace's (vice Mackinnon) Brigade	1/45th Foot	444
	74th Foot	519
	1/88th Foot	935
	3 companies 5/60th Foot	243
Colville's Brigade	2/5th Foot	462
	77th Foot	560
	2/83rd Foot	401
	94th Foot	424

Total 3rd Division, 207 officers, 3,781 men = 3,988.

4th Division. Major-General Lowry Cole.

Kemmis's Brigade	3/27th Foot	770
	1/40th Foot	877
	97th Foot	279
	1 comp. 5/60th Foot	37
Pakenham's Brigade	1/7th Fusiliers	552
	1/23rd R.W. Fusiliers	554
	1/48th Foot	383
	1 comp. Brunswick Oels	49

Total 4th Division, 155 officers, 3,346 men = 3,501.

5th Division. Brigadier-General Dunlop (for Leith).

Hay's Brigade	3/1st Foot	682
	1/9th Foot	626
	2/38th Foot	263
	1 comp. Brunswick Oels	63
Dunlop's Brigade	1/4th Foot	525
	2/30th Foot	388
	2/44th Foot	392
	1 comp. Brunswick Oels	52

Total 5th Division, 162 officers, 2,829 men = 2,991.

6th Division. Major-General A. Campbell.

Hulse's Brigade	1/11th Foot	740
	2/53rd Foot	417
	1/61st Foot	624
	1 comp. 5/60th Foot	40
Burne's Brigade	2nd Foot	543
	1/32nd Foot	794
	1/36th Foot	460

Total 6th Division, 181 officers, 3,437 men = 3,618.

7th Division. Major-General Sontag.

V. Alten's Brigade	1st Light Batt. K.G.L.	602
	2nd ditto	516
	Brunswick Oels (9 comps.)	536
Sontag's Brigade	51st Foot	309
	68th Foot	479
	85th Foot (5 comps.)	166
	Chasseurs Britanniques	671

Total 7th Division, 161 officers, 3,118 men = 3,279.

Light Division. Major-General R. Craufurd.

Barnard's Brigade	1/43rd Foot	1,005
	4 comps. 1/95th	317
	1 comp. 2/95th	86
	detachment 3/95th	297
2nd Brigade	1/52nd Foot	771
	2/52nd Foot	432
	4 companies 1/95th	339

Total Light Division, 148 officers, 3,099 men = 3,247.

ARTILLERY[1]:	
British: Bull's, Ross's, and Macdonald's Troops R.H.A., Lawson's and Bredin's companies R.A. (including drivers)	464
German: Sympher's company K.G.L.	77
ENGINEERS[1]	143
WAGGON TRAIN[1]	136

[1] The artillery and engineer returns, both British and Portuguese, are given in bulk for the whole army, including Hill's force in Estremadura and units left at Lisbon. Distributing the numbers proportionately, the above figures would result; they cannot be far wrong.

TOTAL BRITISH ARMY

Cavalry	3,012	7th Division	3,279
1st Division	4,926	Light Division	3,247
3rd Division	3,988	Artillery	541
4th Division	3,501	Engineers	143
5th Division	2,991	Waggon Train	136
6th Division	3,618		
		Total	29,382

PORTUGUESE (officers and men together)

3rd Division: Palmeirim's Brigade (9th and 21st Line)	1,289
4th Division: Collins's Brigade (11th and 23rd Line, 7th Caçadores)	2,982
5th Division: Spry's Brigade (3rd and 15th Line, 8th Caçadores)	2,014
6th Division: Madden's Brigade (8th and 12th Line)	2,069
7th Division: Coleman's Brigade (7th and 19th Line, 2nd Caçadores)	1,823
Light Division: 1st and 3rd Caçadores	953
Pack's Independent Brigade (1st and 16th Line, 4th Caçadores)	2,206
McMahon's Independent Brigade (13th and 22nd Line, 5th Caçadores)	2,489
Madden's Cavalry (1st, 3rd, 4th, 7th regiments)	1,014
Artillery, 5 batteries	510
Total	17,349

Total Allied Army = 46,731.

XXI

COMBAT OF EL BODON. SEPTEMBER 25, 1811

BRITISH LOSSES

	Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		
	Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total.*
11th Light Dragoons	—	8	2	14	—	—	24
1st Hussars, King's German Legion	—	5	2	32	—	5	44
2/5th Foot	—	5	1	13	—	—	19
1/45th Foot	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
77th Foot	—	4	—	14	—	5	23
2/83rd Foot	—	5	—	14	—	5	24
1/88th Foot	—	—	—	—	—	5	5
94th Foot	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
	—	27	5	87	—	22	141
Portuguese (Artillery and 21st Line)	—	1	—	5	—	2	8

Total Allied loss, 149.

On the same day there took place the separate combat of Carpio, in which the British loss was—

14th Light Dragoons	—	—	1	2	—	—	3
16th Light Dragoons	—	—	—	8	—	1	9

Total, 12 killed, wounded, and missing.

XXII

COMBAT OF ALDEA DA PONTE SEPTEMBER 28, 1811

BRITISH LOSSES

	Killed.		*Wounded.*		*Missing.*		
	Officers.	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Total.*
Royal Horse Artillery	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
1st Royal Dragoons	—	—	—	3	—	1	4
12th Light Dragoons	—	—	—	2	—	4	6
1/7th Fusiliers	—	9	4	29	—	—	42
1/23rd Fusiliers	1	2	2	13	—	1	19
1/48th Foot	—	—	1	7	—	2	10
5/60th	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Brunswick Oels	—	1	—	3	—	—	4
	1	12	9	57	—	8	87
Portuguese Losses	—	1	—	11	—	1	13

Total loss of the Allied Army = 100.

XXIII

HILL'S FORCE IN ESTREMADURA SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1811

	Officers.	*Men.*	*Total.*
2nd Division:			
Byng's Brigade: 1/3rd, 1/57th, 2/31st, 2/66th .			
Howard's Brigade: 1/50th, 1/71st, 1/92nd .	306	5,548	5,854
Wilson's Brigade: 1/28th, 1/34th, 1/39th .			
Hamilton's Portuguese Division:			
2nd, 4th, 10th, 14th Line (2 batts. each) . .	224	4,858	5,082
Ashworth's Portuguese Brigade:			
6th and 18th Line and 6th Caçadores (5 batts.) .	81	2,338	2,419
CAVALRY. Major-General Sir W. Erskine:			
Long's Cavalry Brigade: 9th and 13th Light Dragoons, 2nd Hussars K.G.L. . . .	50	803	853
Le Marchant's Brigade: 3rd Dragoons, 4th Dragoon Guards	36	929	965
Brigade of Portuguese Cavalry (5th and 8th regts.)	57	591	648
[1] Artillery, British: Lefebure's Troop R.H.A., Hawker's and Meadows's Companies R.A., about	20	320	340
[1] Artillery, Portuguese: 2 companies (Arriaga and Braun), about	10	220	230
[1] Engineers and Train, about	13	80	93
General Total . .	797	15,687	16,484

[1] For figures of Artillery, Engineers, &c., see note to previous Appendix, No. XX.

XXIV

BRITISH AND PORTUGUESE ARTILLERY IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1811

Major J. H. Leslie, R.A., the editor of the 'Dickson Manuscripts,' has been good enough to compile and annotate the following list of the Artillery units which served in the various campaigns of the year 1811.

I. ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY

The following Troops were serving in the Peninsula in 1811 :—

Troop.	*Under the command of.*	*Arrived in Peninsula.*	*Designation in* 1911.
A	Captain H. D. Ross	July 1809	'A' Battery, R.H.A.
D	Captain G. Lefebure	March 1810	'V' Battery, R.H.A.[1]
E	Captain R. Macdonald	August 1811	'E' Battery, R.H.A.
I	Captain R. Bull	August 1809	'I' Battery, R.H.A.

'A' and 'I' Troops served with Wellington's Army during Masséna's retreat in the spring of 1811, and in the campaign of Fuentes de Oñoro.

In that battle 'A' Troop was with the left wing, and did not come into action, but 'I' Troop was hotly engaged, and it was whilst in charge of two guns of the Troop that 2nd Captain W. Norman Ramsay performed his celebrated exploit.

'D' Troop was with Beresford's Army and present at Albuera, May 16.

'E' Troop did not arrive from England until the autumn, and was then attached to the 7th Division of the Army.

II. ROYAL (FOOT) ARTILLERY

The 14 companies shown in the following tables were serving in the Peninsula in 1811.

NOTE.—In 1811 there were 10 battalions of Royal (Foot) Artillery, the companies of which were always designated by the names of the commanding officer, whether he was actually present with his company or not.

Battalion.	*Under the command of.*	*Arrived in Peninsula.*	*Designation in* 1911.
1st	Captain J. May	March 1809	2nd Battery, R.F.A.
4th	Captain (Brevet Major) J. Hawker	October 1810	72 Company, R.G.A.
7th	Captain G. Thompson	March 1809	18th Battery, R.F.A.
8th	Captain (Brevet Major) A. Bredin	August 1808	27th Battery, R.F.A.
8th	Captain R. Lawson	August 1808	87th Battery, R.F.A.
8th	Captain P. Meadows	October 1810	Reduced in 1819.

[1] D troop was reduced in 1816, and re-formed in 1900, under its present designation.

Thompson's and Lawson's Companies served with Wellington's Army during Masséna's retreat into Spain in the spring of 1811, and in the campaign of Fuentes de Oñoro.

Later in the year—August—Thompson's Company was withdrawn from the front, owing to continued sickness, and replaced by Bredin's Company.

Hawker's Company served with Beresford's Army. It was present at the battle of Albuera, and at the two unsuccessful sieges of Badajoz (May–June 1811).

Meadows's Company went to the front late in the year, replacing Cleeves's Company of the King's German Legion.

May's Company (under the command of 2nd Captain H. Baynes, May being employed on the Staff) accompanied the Army, in charge of the Reserve Ammunition.

The other eight companies did not join the Army at the front, except Raynsford's for a short period.

Battalion.	*Under the command of.*	*Arrived in Peninsula.*	*Designation in* 1911.
5th	Captain F. Glubb	March 1809	48 Company, R.G.A.
6th	Captain H. F. Holcombe	April 1811	102 Company, R.G.A.
8th	Captain R. T. Raynsford	April 1811	78 Company, R.G.A.
5th	Captain H. Owen	January 1810	60 Company, R.G.A.
9th	Captain P. J. Hughes	January 1810	Reduced in 1819
10th	Captain W. Roberts	March 1810	63 Company, R.G.A.
10th	Captain A. Dickson[1]	April 1810	21 Company, R.G.A.
10th	Captain W. H. Shenley	April 1810	11 Company, R.G.A.

Glubb's and Holcombe's Companies were attached during the latter part of 1811 to the siege-train, which was being equipped on the Douro by Major A. Dickson, for the proposed siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.

Raynsford's Company took part in the second siege of Badajoz—May 30 to June 10.

The other five companies were stationed in Cadiz and the Isla de Leon.

III. KING'S GERMAN LEGION ARTILLERY

Two of the three companies of the Legion Foot Artillery (Nos. 2 and 4, commanded by Captains Andrew Cleeves and Frederick Sympher), which had been in the Peninsula for the last two years, accompanied Beresford on his Estremaduran expedition, and were present at the battle of Albuera. Cleeves's was so cut up that it was sent to the rear in June, Meadows's British Company taking its place at the front. The third company, that of Gesenius, was left at Lisbon.

[1] This company was actually commanded by Captain R. H. Birch, as Dickson was serving in the Portuguese Artillery.

IV. PORTUGUESE ARTILLERY

(The details are taken from Captain Teixeira Botelho's *Subsidios.*)

(*a*) Five Portuguese field-batteries accompanied Wellington in his pursuit of Masséna and in the Fuentes de Oñoro campaign.

Two of these batteries, brigaded together under Major V. von Arentschildt, came from the 2nd regiment and were attached to Picton's Division; they were commanded by Lieutenants J. C. de Sequeira and 2nd Lieut. J. C. Rosado.

A third, also from the 2nd regiment, under the command of Captain F. C. Pinto, was attached to Pack's Portuguese brigade.

One battery from the 1st regiment, under the command of Captain J. da Cunha Preto, was attached to the 5th Division in these campaigns.

Another battery of the same regiment (Captain Pedro de Rozierres) was attached to the 6th Division.

(*b*) Two batteries, brigaded under Major Alexander Dickson, accompanied Beresford's Army to Estremadura and fought at Albuera, viz. one from the 2nd regiment under Captain W. Braun, and one from the 1st regiment under Captain S. J. de Arriaga.

(*c*) For the two sieges of Badajoz in May and June, the 2nd regiment supplied a half-company under Captain F. A. de Sequeira; the 1st regiment a company under Captain F. Pedrosa Barreto; and the 3rd regiment three companies, the captains' names of which are not preserved, save one, José de Sampayo.

(*d*) The 4th regiment supplied Silveira with two batteries under Captains F. J. de Mariz and D. G. Ferreri, which were engaged in his combats with Claparéde in the early part of the year.

(*e*) The half-company which defended Campo Mayor in March came from the 3rd regiment and was commanded by Lieut. J. J. Leál Morteira.

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